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WORLD Conferences should be called to complete and popularise agreements which have already been reached. If they meet, as this one proves to have done, without the leading Powers having made up their minds about anything, the result is likely to be farcical. The first incident—Senator Pittman's repudiation of a tariff reduction proposal which had been erroneously put forward as representing the policy of the United States delegation when it had been intended merely as a subject of discussion—was symbolic of the conflict between economic nationalism and economic internationalism, which is now going on in the United States. Since American policy is all important the Conference has now nothing to do except to await the arrival of Professor Moley. If he brings a definite message from Mr. Roosevelt the wheels of the Conference may begin to turn. If he is no better than his word, if, that is to say, he is merely coming to give the American delegation "background" about developments during the last few weeks in the United States, it would really seem a waste of time and cash to continue the Conference.

### Stabilisation

It appears that war debts are not the only question which is excluded from the reference of the American delegation. The restriction applies equally to any attempt to reach a temporary agreement for the stabilisation of currencies. Long term conditions of stabilisation the American delegates are authorised to discuss; but temporary measures are a matter not for them, but for the President himself. The actual discussions which took place last week on this issue had no official connection with the Conference; and the parties to them were not Governments, but the Bank of England, the Bank of France, and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The provisional agreement reached by these bankers, for temporary stabilisation within limits, was promptly disavowed and disapproved by President Roosevelt. This may be no bad thing, since the agreement had all the appearances of an attempt by the bankers to take the first step back to the gold standard behind the public's, and even behind the Governments', backs. There is much to be said in favour of stabilised currencies, and yet more to be said against a race of competitive exchange depreciation. But we certainly cannot afford to be rushed into an agreement which may prove to be based on over-valuing the pound in terms of the dollar, and will be subject to being upset at any moment by vagaries in the currency policy of the United States.

### Just Right!

Is England's policy, despite Mr. Chamberlain's speech, much clearer than America's? Like the Americans, we want to go back to gold, but only on our own terms and

own conditions. We profess to desire tariff reduction, but Mr. Runciman and Mr. Chamberlain explain that they prefer the British type of bilateral agreements and concessions—in a word, the British attitude is that British tariffs are just the right tariffs and British quotas just the right sort of quotas, so that all that is necessary is for other countries to suit their policy to ours. Then we want to see world prices raised; but Mr. Chamberlain seems to hover between a hope of achieving this by concerted limitation of output and a somewhat naive faith in the potency of a liberal credit policy backed up by open-market operations of the Central Banks. Only the French seem to be quite clear about what they want—an unconditional and immediate return to gold and a concerted policy of limiting production as well as cutting costs; and their policy stands least chance of all of being accepted by the other leading countries as a basis for international action. For, so far from helping to raise most prices, it would lower them yet further, by applying a fresh homœopathic dose of deflation to an already deflated world.

### The Real Problem

Nothing then seems likely to happen about either currency or trade restrictions, and it would have been better, if practicable, for the Conference to have started with the question whether world action is, or is not, to be taken for increasing the levels of world prices. According as this can be done or not, every other issue now before the Conference is bound to look radically different. But no one has yet produced any plan that even looks workable for causing prices to rise by monetary action. It is all very well for Mr. Chamberlain to sing the praises of a liberal credit policy and active open-market operations. The real question is whether his own Government is prepared to abandon its policy of false economy, and to launch out on big schemes of public works, or on financing public works in the debtor countries, so as to set the stream of investment flowing again strongly enough to stimulate a revival. We see no sign that Mr. Chamberlain is prepared to do this—indeed, in this respect M. Daladier is a good deal the more assuring of the two. But until he is ready, we shall regard with the greatest scepticism his easier alternative of attempting to revive industry by mere monetary manipulation, or even by monetary manipulation combined with special measures for decreasing the supply of goods. For, as Mr. Bruce of Australia pointed out on Tuesday, the world's problem is not to decrease production, but to increase purchasing power.

### Herr Hugenberg's Gaffe

What was the meaning of the extraordinary memorandum that Herr Hugenberg presented to the Economic Conference last Friday? It was largely rodomontade of the usual Nazi type, and might have passed quite unnoticed, but for its announcement that Germany must have colonies in Africa, and that she had her eye also on further territory in Eastern Europe. Some thought that Herr Hugenberg had been put up to fly a kite. But if so the wind was very quickly seen to be unfavourable; the German delegation instantly disavowed and cancelled the memorandum, its author went off to Berlin, and the Wilhelmstrasse declared that he was merely expressing his own views. So far as German colonies in Africa are concerned, there is, of course, nothing either novel or shocking in the idea; only this is hardly the time to broach it. It is even suggested that Herr Hitler, knowing this, encouraged Herr Hugenberg to make the *gaffe*, in order to provide an occasion for getting rid of him. The intention to get rid of him sooner or later has long been an open secret, and it hardly looks as if he can survive the latest blow that the Nazis have dealt their Nationalist "allies."

### Hitler's New Coup

Acting under the orders of Captain Göring the police and Storm Troops on Wednesday raided and searched the headquarters of the Nationalists' "Fighting Ring" in Berlin and other towns. This organisation has been proscribed, and a number of prominent persons connected with it have been arrested, among them two nephews of Herr Hugenberg. The reason given for this drastic action is that large numbers of Socialists and Communists had joined the "Fighting Ring"—which, from independent evidence in our possession, we believe to be true. The Nationalist Party itself has so far not been touched; but the dissolution of its militia is a heavy blow, and leaves Herr Hugenberg in a humiliating position. With the Stahlhelm also absorbed, Hitler will have a monopoly of the armed forces, and before long we may expect the National-Socialist Party to be the only party in Germany, as the Communist Party is in Russia and the Fascist Party in Italy. When that happens, the struggle between the Left and the Right wings—between the socialistic and petty bourgeois sections on the one hand and big business and finance on the other—is likely to take a sharper form.

### The Independence of Austria

In the struggle for Austria's independence, victory rests for the moment with Dr. Dollfuss, and the little Chancellor is acclaimed by the world as the saviour of his country. But what does Austrian independence mean? Desirable as it may be to keep the country out of Hitler's clutches, that is no guarantee of economic prosperity. Austria is a fragment whose only real hope lies in union—either an Anschluss with Germany, which is now ruled out, or a federation of Danubian States, to which there is strong opposition from several quarters, including Austrian quarters. A third alternative—a Habsburg restoration, with the Archduke Otto as King of Austria and of Hungary—is now being pushed by Signor Mussolini. But even supposing this came off—which seems improbable, in view of Little Entente opposition and the coolness of Hungary and Germany—of what economic advantage would it be to Austria? The plan, we are told, goes no farther than a nominal union under one crown; the two States would remain independent for all practical purposes. And let us not deceive ourselves with the idea that Austria under a Dollfuss regime means a "democratic" Austria. Dr. Dollfuss is not an exemplar of liberalism; he is the leader of a reactionary conservatism. M. Léon Blum was justified in the demand he made the other day, that if French money was to be lent to the Austrian Government, it should be lent on conditions which would safeguard popular liberties and prevent the oppression of the Austrian Socialists.

### London and Geneva

It was strange to see Mr. Henderson, who had not been allotted a room at the Geological Museum, interviewing distinguished people behind a screen in a corridor. It will be remembered that after the first reading of the British proposals the Disarmament Conference, by what the *Times* called a "wise procrastination," adjourned for Mr. Henderson to see what reconciliation of different points of view he could accomplish in private conversation. Actually during the incredible confusion of the Economic Conference no one could attend to the little question of Disarmament and the Conference will meet again in July at the point it left off. Only Mr. Henderson's astonishing patience and determination keep it going at all. It is to be expected that he will endeavour soon to force the Conference to a point of final decision; the only conceivable hope is that the prospect of the collapse of the League, the rearmament of Germany and return to international anarchy will frighten nationalist Governments into a change of policy.

### A New Navy for America?

By way of hastening this desirable end Mr. Swanson, the United States Secretary of the Navy, has announced the American programme of naval construction. The world, which might otherwise regard the building of thirty-two new warships over a period of three years, at an estimated cost of £47,000,000, as an unfortunate contribution to disarmament, will be reassured by the explanations that accompany Mr. Swanson's speech. The programme is not yet certain, and in any case it is inspired not by fear of Japan or desire to repudiate the agreement announced only a month ago, whereby a cut of £10,000,000 was to be made in naval expenditure. The new naval construction is simply part of the American administration's policy for stimulating industrial recovery by home expenditure. Since the Washington Government is hard put to it to find public works on which to spend a fifth of the large sum allotted for this purpose, the explanation is not to be laughed at. But the argument is one that can be adopted elsewhere with disastrous effect.

### The King of Iraq

King Feisal of Iraq is, we hope, enjoying his visit to London. We hope also, though we would not bet on it, that a little less bunkum will be written and talked about him than was written and talked a few years ago about that picturesque figure (and slippery customer) the Ameer Amanullah of Afghanistan. Feisal is not an oriental curiosity, but a Western-educated and highly civilised gentleman. He is also one of the few successes of British policy in the Middle East. The Iraq mandate was, in its earlier stages at any rate, an anxious business, and there were many doubts about our experiment of crowning Feisal at Bagdad in 1921, after the French had turned him off his throne in Damascus. But all's well that ends well. The King has made good; his country is now a sovereign State and a member of the League of Nations; we are divested of our mandatory responsibilities, and are free to keep one benevolent eye on the interests of Iraq and the other on the oil that it provides us with. We have, in short, done quite nicely for the Iraqis, for their ruler, and for ourselves. We might perhaps have bothered ourselves a little more on behalf of the minorities. The Kurds we have bombed in the past. Now that Iraq is independent, we are in theory relieved of that unpleasant duty. But the R.A.F. is still in the country, and might be called on to help, as some think, if the Iraq Government finds itself in trouble with the tribesmen. We hope that is a wrong view.

### London University

Next Monday the King will lay the foundation stone of the new University buildings in Bloomsbury. During its life of not quite a century (it was born in 1836) the University of London has had three different headquarters, each of which it has outgrown in due course—first, some modest apartments in Somerset House, then the building in Burlington Gardens now occupied by the Civil Service Commission, and for the past thirty years the Imperial Institute at South Kensington. The Bloomsbury site, behind the British Museum, is not only more convenient, but it gives ample room for buildings big enough for the administrative staff and consonant with the dignity and importance of the University. These buildings, whose architect is Mr. Charles Holden, will comprise much more than offices. Here are to be a library and a great hall, a number of different University institutions, such as the Institute of Historical Research, the Schools of Oriental Studies and Slavonic Studies, the London Day Training College, and the Courtauld Institute of Art. So far as we can judge from plans and models, the scheme when it is completed should be one of the fine sights of London.

### British Industrial Art

To persons of moderate income whose daily happiness is affected by their visible surroundings, the Exhibition of British Industrial Art which opened this week at Dorland House, in Lower Regent Street, will come as a symbol of hope and revelation. The revelation lies in this: that designs which, five years ago, would have been regarded simply as "advanced" experiments, and which, if executed at all, would have had as their purpose only that of advertisement by shock, are now accepted as a normal part of the contemporary everyday setting and have become the subject of standardised production. Such designs, it is true, give but a limited view of British Industrial Art as a whole; they are the outcome of demand on the part of a limited class of persons, the urban flat-dwelling intelligentsia. All the more credit to this class, then, whose insistence and influence have worked such a transformation in the domestic arts during the last ten years. A certain degree of affectation is evident when simplicity deteriorates into mere crudeness; and there are some departments of the domestic aesthetic, such as silver and porcelain, where the inventive spirit still flags. But these defects, inseparable from the vagaries of fashion, are negligible compared with the uniform level of quality and taste that pervades the Exhibition. We have entered on a new phase of domestic design, neither crafty nor allusive, which derives its strength from essential domestic needs, and which continues to uphold the one artistic tradition in which the English have always been accorded supremacy—that of the home.

# UNEMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

WHEN Mr. Mais was giving his celebrated series of broadcast talks on unemployment an unemployed man wrote to him:

> I have often wondered if the so-called National Government is paying you to broadcast the tripe *re* unemployed schemes. However, if you really think that these marvellous schemes are going to keep five million (*sic*) men quiet for another ten years, as per Neville Chamberlain's speech, you are in for a very rude awakening in the near future. The attack will probably take place at dead of night.

This was surely a very natural reaction in an unemployed man who knew that the Government (as it has again shown in the House of Commons in last week's debates) refuses to have any policy about unemployment except to pay the dole to as few people as possible, to hope for better times, and to encourage, with due regard for economy, training, occupational and recreation centres. Mr. Mais's correspondent would probably have added further comments in the same style if he had heard Lord Eustace Percy's ingenious defence of the Government's refusal to raise the school-leaving age and so take a quarter of the juvenile unemployed (now admittedly the most serious factor in the problem) out of the labour market. Lord Eustace explained that it is worse to be unemployed at sixteen after a secondary education than at fourteen without one, and that anyway, since we do not know the shape the new world is going to take, it is no use extending an educational system which will soon be out of date. He provided excellent reasons for filling the gap between school-leaving and insurable age, and he showed that he realised the need for overhauling our educational system, but he made no case for perpetuating this Bedlam category of unemployed children. Of course, it is in the interests of some employers to perpetuate it. They get child labour cheap and throw the children out of work when they reach the insurable age. While these are the arguments used and this is the Government's policy, can we be surprised if here and there an employed man smells charity in every scheme for helping the individual unemployed and regards every effort at local improvement as a scheme for dulling the consciences of the rich and the anger of the poor?

Nevertheless, our unemployed man was quite unfair to Mr. Mais and not sufficiently discriminating between various types of unemployment centres. In the first place, Mr. Mais's wireless talks, now published with a mass of most illuminating correspondence in a book called *S.O.S. Talks on Unemployment*, have done more than anything else to shake the middle-class out of its complacency and by descriptions of local conditions (the Englishman always likes to judge from the individual cases rather than from scientifically compiled statistics) to show that "malnutrition"—the official word for the early stages of starvation—exists to-day in this country on a scale unparalleled since the hungry 'forties. No one is likely to call Mr. Mais an agitator when he protests against a family of ten having to live in two rooms (rent 7*s*.) and to feed and clothe themselves on 33*s*. a week. His account of the dug-outs of the unemployed in the slag heaps of Glasgow was effective just because no one could call it Socialist propaganda. Secondly, Mr. Mais has no use for unemployment schemes which are not run by the men themselves, and he has so little sympathy with conventional notions that, when one of the black-coated unemployed said that he felt ashamed to be seen at the Labour Exchange drawing the dole, Mr. Mais replied with very proper heat: "My God, man, are you ashamed to be seen entering your own bank?"

Now there are many types of clubs and "centres." Some are mere "rest-rooms"—for men who want to be alive, not to rest; rooms which are nothing but "the street with a roof on," places where men sit, eating their hearts out with dominoes or newspapers in front of them and not a hope to call their own. Graveyards, Mr. Mais calls them. The genuine occupational centre may be a very different affair. Once the point is grasped that there is work to be done and work which is worth doing in spite of the fact that it is not "economic," new possibilities are opened up for the unemployed.

Unemployment is the combination of two evils—lack of a job, i.e., of a function in society, and lack of money to make tolerable the leisure which the upper classes can afford to enjoy. The second of these evils cannot be cured, or substantially alleviated, by any local or patch-work scheme, though allotments in which the unemployed can grow their own vegetables, and centres in which they can club together to buy necessities at wholesale prices and can work together to mend their own clothes, shoes and furniture, may mean a great deal to men who live on the starvation line. But the first of these evils—the lack of a job and an object in life—the better unemployment centres may really do something to overcome. The limits in the present state of society are narrow. Care has to be taken not to undermine the standard of living of those who are in work. But since the unemployed cannot afford to have their boots or their clothes or their furniture repaired at commercial rates, they are doing no ill turn to anyone by learning to do these jobs for themselves. Their children have no toys and they find in some centres happiness besides occupation in making toys as well as necessities. And, apart from this direct labour for use at home, the National Council for Social Service has been able to work out a long and surprising list of occupations which can be followed by the unemployed without the product interfering with any ordinary commercial market. A flourishing occupational centre, such as that at Lincoln, where a committee of the unemployed sit to decide on the elegibility of applicants for membership, is more than a method of preventing men from losing their craft skill and rotting in idleness; it may be the beginning of a really important movement by which the Socialist notion that work should be done because it is wanted and not because it makes a profit for someone is, in a small way, put into practice. The group of unemployed at Bryn Mawr were possibly doing something bigger than the world yet realises when, with the aid of a leader of genius, they set to work to clear away the slag heaps and refuse of derelict capitalist industry and to construct a recreation ground and a swimming bath for the community.

Now it is, of course, true that these schemes are still small, and that they cover only a fraction of the unemployed. There are some 300,000 unemployed affected by them and only half of the centres can claim to be in

any real sense "occupational." Nor can one be sure that even the best of these schemes is more than a temporary palliative until there is more proof than there is at present of the likelihood of their achieving financial independence. But, apart from the human advantage in bringing some happiness and some object in life to men who would otherwise be without it, we can say this. In a small way and largely by local initiative, the notion that a man is "unemployed" and therefore to be scrapped because it does not pay someone to employ him, is being destroyed. Since the State has refused to finance "uneconomic" plans on a big scale, men and women with initiative are attempting it, everyone in a different way, in their own localities. Most of these experiments are small, some are badly conceived and wrong in principle, others may prove, especially in areas where the new "leisure" is likely to be permanent leisure, to be the germ of a new type of organisation. It is an odd movement, surprisingly English in its lack of conscious direction and its reliance on individual initiative. So far from being a method of drugging the unemployed, it seems to us, where it is genuine, likely to breed an independence and an attitude of robust and intelligent criticism in striking contrast to the despairing coma which is common where the unemployed man has been left to become the unemployable one. How far this movement will develop we do not yet know. Possibly not very far. But it contains an idea and it shows signs of growing in directions envisaged neither by charity nor by the State. One is reminded of the early days of the Co-operative Movement, of its numerous experiments and failures, and of its miraculous growth when the Rochdale pioneers had stumbled upon the right form and method. We may be witnessing a birth of the same importance to-day.

## THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

[Dr. Breitscheid was for some years leader of the Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag. He is now in exile.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

A GERMAN who comes to another country as an opponent of the Hitler regime is always asked two questions: how was National-Socialism able to become so strong and powerful, and how is it to be explained that the great German Labour movement made way for it practically without resistance?

The first question would require a very full reply, in which it would be necessary to go into details concerning the economic and psychical distress of the German people, the widespread unemployment, the abandonment of rationalism, the mistakes of the international post-war policy, and many other things. The second question will be dealt with here, at least on broad lines, by one who lived through the events of the past few years in a leading position in the Social Democratic group in the Reichstag.

A comparison is often made between the combative attitude of the German working class on the occasion of the Kapp *Putsch* in 1920 and its inactivity in March, 1933, and in our propaganda in recent years we Social Democrats ourselves have often enough recalled the defeat of the Kapp rebels. But we have not taken sufficient account of very important distinctions between the situation as it was thirteen years ago and as it was when Hitler came to power. Kapp, the director of an agricultural credit institute, entered the Chancery of the Reich accompanied by a handful of adventurers who were not to be taken very seriously and relying for his support upon a few thousand *Landsknechte* returned from the Baltic. His action was an imperfectly prepared surprise. But Hitler came with a Brown Army, reckoned in hundreds of thousands and sufficiently equipped for a civil war, and he entered upon his rule according to a plan that had been drawn up with extreme care as the result of the work of years. The mistake of the anti-Fascists is not to be sought in the renunciation of resistance at the outbreak of the "national revolution," but in the fact that they did not interrupt the dangerous preparations in time and confined themselves to an attempt to maintain, by forming parliamentary majorities, a democratic regime that was, moreover, becoming more and more dubious.

This was in its turn connected to a large extent with the attitude of the bourgeoisie, which itself inclined more and more to the idea of dictatorship and thus became the prey of National-Socialist propaganda. Whereas Herr Kapp found very little sympathy among the bourgeois centre parties there was practically no opposition whatever to Hitler in the bourgeois camp, and a general strike in 1933 would not have received the moral support which fell to its lot in 1920 in wide circles of the non-working-class population.

Added to this was the growth in strength of the Communist movement in the interval. Thirteen years ago it cut an unimportant figure numerically. Now it had almost caught up to the Social Democratic Party in extent, and this meant a fatal division in the working class. The Communists, who found satisfaction at least in the political methods of the Nazis, conducted their main struggle throughout the most recent period not against Fascism but against the Social Democratic Party. In 1931 they openly took sides with the reactionary opponents of the Government in Prussia and at each of the numerous elections in 1932 their slogan was, "Against the Social Democratic Party!" All attempts at an understanding failed, with the result that the working-class front was broken when the decisive encounter came. Their impetus was paralysed, there was no uniform leadership, and this dissension favoured the enemy.

These are all more in the nature of external reasons for what has been called the "failure" of the German working class. There were also inward reluctances in the Social Democratic Party and the kindred trade unions, and they count for even more.

In decades of teaching the German Social Democratic Party had brought up its supporters to believe in legality. In this they followed the example given by Karl Marx when he rejected the Bakunist and other wholly or partially anarchist groups. Even under the Bismarck Exceptional Law, which was admittedly child's play in comparison with the Hitler persecutions, the Social Democratic Party rejected acts of terror and force, although it was treated by the State of that time as outside the law. After the revolution of 1918 it was filled with the conviction that only the path of legality could lead it to its goal. It was now actively co-operating with the State which had previously been antagonistic towards it. It was represented in various governments in the Reich and in the States. Its representatives sat on the State and municipal administrative bodies. It did not doubt that the democratic-parliamentary play of forces, in combination with its activity in organisation and propaganda in the country, would finally, even if slowly, assure it of success.

If it committed a mistake in this, it consisted in overrating the critical will of large sections of the German people and in underrating the reactionary agitation. It may be reproached with this mistake, but its adherence to legality cannot be condemned in principle. In any case, its attitude on the decisive days and during the period immediately following is to a great extent to be explained by this. But here, also, is one of the reasons for the desire of the Trade Unions to accommodate themselves and for the conduct of the members of the Parliamentary Group who have remained in Germany. They all find it terribly difficult to accustom themselves to illegality and to bury their hope of opportunities for some kind of legal opposition.

But however comprehensible this mentality is, and however intelligible the hesitation may be, which arose not least from a failure to recognise the essence of Fascist ideas of the State, the responsible leaders of the Party could not permanently indulge in such illusions. When the work in Germany was made impossible by the suppression of the press, the prohibition of meetings, and the arrest of Socialist Party members, when the regime of parliamentarism was reduced to a farce, the path followed so far had to be abandoned and first and foremost a new centre established outside the German frontiers.

And this has now been done! The leadership of the Party, or at least the greater and most authoritative part of it, has been removed to Prague. There it will publish a newspaper, a review and pamphlets, and will attempt in addition to rally the forces opposed to Hitlerism which exist in Germany and provide them with the intellectual weapons for their fight. These forces are still numerous and animated by a determined will. We should not be deceived by the victorious reports of the Nazis. Proofs exist in abundance that the spark is glowing under the ashes and that vast masses of workers in particular, even if they appear to have bowed in silence beneath the yoke, adhere to the democratic and Socialist ideals and are prepared to make sacrifices for them. Their energy has to be consolidated. The hostility of the ruling system to culture and humanity must repeatedly be held before their eyes. Its inward mendacity, its inability to help the working masses, its frivolous play with the word Socialism, must constantly be brought out into the light again, and the duty of the centre in Prague will at the same time consist in informing foreign opinion of conditions in Germany and helping to combine and strengthen anti-Fascist feelings throughout the world.

Certainly the task of the "illegal" Party leadership will not be light. The introduction of their work into Germany is faced with enormous obstacles. The abject brutality with which Hitlerism fights its opponents will exceed itself when the time comes to oppose the "incitement" and "disintegration" conducted from abroad. To this must be added certain difficulties which may arise in connection with the supporters living in Germany with or without illusions. But the game with high stakes must be ventured, and this work of education and encouragement will bear fruit—of that no doubt is possible.

Whether those who devote themselves to this work will one day be called upon to become the leaders of a newly arising Labour movement in Germany is a question of secondary importance. They must be content, as Schiller would say, with having added stone upon stone to the great edifice of time.

RUDOLF BREITSCHEID

## SOCIAL CREDIT AND THE FOREIGN TRADE DILEMMA

[We print this article by a convert to the theory of Social Credit because, without discussing the technical economic problem, it does give a very clear account of the political philosophy involved in the Douglas theory—a philosophy which is shared by many people who regard the economics of Douglas as fallacious.—ED. *N. S. & N.*]

MR. JOSEPH CONNOLLY, the delegate of the Irish Free State, surprised the Economic Conference by suggesting that since orthodox economics appear to be strangling the world it might be wise to try something new.

> "The position in which we are endeavouring to survive to-day," he said, "has been built on the system of production, credit, and finance that still seems to be accepted as inevitable. Must we accept it as inevitable? Has it worked? Is it working? Is it possible to set it working again? These are the questions that we may well ask ourselves when we are warned that we must do nothing 'to diminish confidence in the banking system,' that 'the machine is delicate,' and so forth. My feeling is that the machine is so 'delicate' that it has ceased to be effective; and as regards confidence, I ask where that 'confidence' is to be found."

Mr. Connolly's further remarks show that among the schemes he thinks worth considering is Major Douglas's Social Credit system—a system which is certainly in line with the present world-drift toward economic nationalism, and which would make its strongest appeal to relatively self-sufficient countries such as tiny Ireland or continental America. Apart from the technical argument the commonest general objection to Social Credit is that it must interfere with foreign trade, thus reducing the general standard of living—a statement which is not so self-evident as is sometimes thought.

There are two main forms of international trade. One is the simple exchange of goods and services; the other (which may be direct or triangular) is a more complicated trade, consisting of goods sent by creditor to debtor nations as a result of foreign investments, and of goods returned by debtor to creditor nations in payment of interest. For the most part, such trade consists of manufactured goods exported by the investing countries, and of foodstuffs or raw materials returned by the borrowing countries. It is a by-product of the early period of the Industrial Revolution, and it must steadily diminish as that revolution spreads through the world. The rate of its decline has recently been accelerated, for reasons too well known to need recapitulation. As a result, more and more nations are now planning to make themselves as independent as possible from this form of trade, which means that the industrial countries are attempting to revive their agriculture, while the rural countries are building home industries as fast as possible. At the same time, the writing down of all forms of foreign indebtedness, which is a striking feature of the present scene, is having a discouraging effect on the investing public—another reason why the loan-financed form of foreign trade diminishes. And lastly, liberal opinion, which used to see such trade as an aid to international solidarity and good feeling, is coming to believe that in the world's present state the struggle for this type of trade would be a probable prelude to war. With every industrial nation increasing its productivity from year to year, and with the world-markets for this production shrinking from year to year, an international struggle for the privilege of financing, and monopolising, these waning markets would be a world-disaster—and would, incidentally, create an otherwise unthinkable Anglo-American crisis. There are reasons, therefore, both of expediency and of morality, for welcoming the view that the nineteenth-century type of loan-built foreign trade can no longer be a main support of any country's economy.

None of this, of course, applies to the first type of international trade, the equal exchange of goods and services. Such trade is compatible with the most extreme economic nationalism, though the experience of the United States, when it bartered wheat for Brazilian coffee, suggests that in the world as now organised the barter of goods can cause as much friction as the most sinister foreign loans. From the point of view of a nation's economic planning, however, this barter type of international trade hardly counts as foreign trade at all. Its effect is simply to diversify the nation's production. It does not alter domestic purchasing power, or help to solve the problem of surplus production. A surplus which cannot be purchased domestically in the first place cannot be purchased either in the form of goods received in exchange. Hence the widespread belief that the era on which the world seems to be entering, an era of economic nationalism diversified by foreign trade of the barter type, will involve a curtailment of prosperity—not, of course, below the present level, but below that obtaining during the best days of foreign investment trade. This belief was voiced by the Prime Minister at the opening of the Economic Conference, and found expression in Mr. Louis Fischer's article on America's Problems in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for June 10th. "The United States," wrote Mr. Fischer, "has advanced beyond the stage where its sole concern is the satisfaction of popular consumption requirements. . . . We must, therefore, export money and goods. . . . Deliberate economic nationalism would be suicide. And yet, since no intelligent statesman is very sanguine about the results to be expected from London or from similar efforts, plans to accommodate the United

States to a disastrous situation in which economic autarchy will be the only real alternative, are under way."

Need this be a "disastrous situation"? Must economic autarchy bring, in Mr. Fischer's words, a "backward movement"? Orthodox finance would probably answer "yes"; but since economic autarchy seems an inevitable movement, it is to be hoped that such pessimism is not justified. From the point of view of the Social Credit school it is emphatically unjustified. The Douglasites, as readers of *Social Credit** may discover for themselves, welcome economic autarchy (with the proviso that it includes international trade of the barter type) as the first step toward widespread prosperity.

They contend that the existing decline of foreign-investment trade is inevitable, permanent, and highly desirable. And they contend that the world's present technological knowledge (without betting on further additions) will quickly lead to a condition wherein unemployment, on a far larger scale than is known at present, will also be inevitable and permanent. "Most of us in a vague way realise . . ." said Major Douglas in a recent address, "that machinery is displacing labour, but few of us who are not specially engaged in research into the matter realise to what extent this is true. One of my friends has calculated that without any marked improvement of process, but merely proceeding along our present lines, we should by 1940 have over eight million unemployed in this country, for the same output, and as, at the present time, there are under seventeen million in the employable population, that will mean that more than half the employable population will be, as we now phrase it, 'unemployed.' Personally, I have no doubt that this is an underestimate." And he then gave reasons for believing that the time must soon come when "the necessary work of the world could be carried on easily by about a tenth of the available labour." If anything resembling such a state of affairs is indeed approaching, there is strength to the Douglasite contention that the present system of distributing purchasing power, chiefly by means of wages and salaries, is obsolete.

Our present system, says Major Douglas, if unmodified, will lead us to a state in which domestic trade (including the fair barter of goods with foreign nations) is clogged by the fact that only a fraction of the employable population is in receipt of purchasing power, and in which loan-created foreign trade is clogged for the reasons given above. At the same time, he believes that there will be available, as another result of the machine, more real wealth than man has ever before had at his disposal; that in the Western industrial world there is no longer any necessity for want, that the materials and the machines and the men are at hand to create a superabundance of life's needs. This vast real wealth, he says, is the product of "the cultural inheritance by the aid of which wealth in practically unlimited quantity can be produced by a small and diminishing amount of human labour." In order to realise this potential wealth the nation must provide its citizens with an effective demand on production; and, since this huge recent increase is a common inheritance (a kind of unearned increment for the entire nation), justice demands that it should be made available for all. A feature of the Social Credit proposal is that the State should issue to all its citizens national dividends, against the yearly net increase in the real wealth of the country, so as to enable its citizens to purchase all the consumption goods which the community is able and willing to produce. Among these consumption goods, of course, would be included those received in exchange for exports. For the purposes of Social Credit, there is no distinction between goods made and consumed at home and goods made at home and exchanged abroad.

It should be noted that Major Douglas defines a nation's "real wealth" as the rate at which goods and services can be delivered as, when, and where required. "It seems difficult," he writes, "to object to the statement that the real basis of credit is the producing and consuming capacity of the community, and still more difficult to justify a condition of affairs in which this credit is loaned to it as an act of grace."

If, aside from problems of detail, this proposal for national dividends seems too audacious, it is only fair to recognise that it is not audacious unless the possibilities of machine production have been grossly overrated. If it be true that the Western world can now produce (or procure in exchange) all the raw materials, all the manufactured goods, and all the agricultural products that it can desire, and that it will soon be able to produce these with less than 50 per cent. of the available labour supply, then a system of "Dividends for All" seems logical. "Money," Major Douglas writes, "is nothing but an effective demand. It is not wealth, it is not production, and it has no inherent and indissoluble connection with anything whatsoever except effective demand." If the Western world's potential supply of all types of goods has far outrun, not its desire, but the demand which its money system allows it to make effective, then the time may have come for listening to the "money cranks." If, as the result of two centuries of desultory invention, we have, in fact, stumbled upon an age of possible plenty, it stands to reason that a money system which grew up during an age of scarcity may well have paralysing defects.

When the Social Credit scheme was first advanced, just after the war, the world was beginning what may prove to have been its final fling at the old foreign investment game. Major Douglas predicted that the game would last until about 1929, and that when it was played out the nations could no longer conceal from themselves the discrepancy between their powers of production and of consumption. It now looks as if the second part of his prophecy may be as accurate as the first, as if the true world-problem for the present generation may be the problem of learning how to prevent our machines from beggaring us, the problem of seeing to it, in the words of Major Douglas's evidence before the Macmillan Committee, that in spite of the machine age, "the cash credits of the population of any country shall at any moment be collectively equal to the collective cash prices for the consumable goods for sale in that country (irrespective of the cost prices of such goods), and such cash credits shall be cancelled or depreciated only on the purchase or depreciation of goods for consumption." (The details of the Douglas plan for creating and cancelling these consumer-credits may be studied in the Draft Social Credit Scheme for Scotland.) If the era of economic nationalism on which we are now entering forces a concentration of attention on this problem, it may prove to be a blessing, rather than the disaster that Mr. Louis Fischer foresees. A.

**Social Credit*, by C. H. Douglas, third edition, revised and enlarged. (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 3/6.)

# A LONDON DIARY

AN eminent delegate at South Kensington wants to know what body-line bowling is, why a controversy about it appears in the place of honour in our leading newspapers side by side with the account of the opening ceremony of the World Conference, and whether the M.C.C. is a secret society, since it is never referred to except by its initials? I think the mystery is best cleared up in some such terms as these. According to the Australian Cricket Authorities bowling a ball with a certain pace, direction and intent, known as "body-line bowling," is Not Cricket. According to the English authorities such behaviour is Cricket, but for the crowd to taunt the players (known as "barracking") is Not Cricket. Plainly, therefore, the issue at stake is, What is Cricket? Cricket, says the dictionary, is a game—not, as the delegates would imagine, an International Problem. But this cannot be the whole truth of the matter, for apparently neither the said bowling nor the said barracking is contrary to the current rules of the game in question. The truth is that of the two main classes of Cricket, Test Cricket and just plain Cricket, neither is really a game at all. The one is a business, an affair of grim struggle, newspaper headlines, and public disputation. The

other is a Religion; and what is Not Cricket is what is repugnant, not to the ritual, but to the spirit of that religion. Hence Test Cricket, being inherently irreligious, is Not Cricket, and, if the delegate wants my opinion, it is that since no nation can serve two masters, we must choose between Cricket and Test Cricket.

* * *

The Women's Co-operative Guild, which has been celebrating its jubilee this week in its annual congress at the Central Hall, is the most remarkable women's organisation in the world. It has over 70,000 members and they are practically all working-class women. Its delegates filled the floor of the great Central Hall and overflowed into the galleries. I do not often enjoy the congresses and conferences which Parties, Guilds, and Associations bring upon us every year with the roses and the strawberries, but I make an exception of the Women's Guild. The Guild and its Congress are *sui generis;* nowhere else can you hear the authentic and composite voice of the working-class mother. You do not hear there as a rule the professional orator or politician, but you hear more sound common sense applied to society and politics than in any other assembly of which I have experience. You also discover that it is the most orderly and businesslike large public meeting that you have ever attended. As if to prove the charge of bourgeois bias, the B.B.C. refused to broadcast the speeches at this Congress; it thereby deprived listeners of the opportunity of hearing something a little different from the hackneyed clichés which are so often broadcast from "respectable" bourgeois public meetings and dinners. And I do not think that what they heard could possibly have shocked even the most sensitive ears of bourgeois listeners. I noticed one small, but interesting, fact connected with this Congress. It must be about fifteen years since I first attended a Congress of the Guild and I remember that the members at that time, sitting in their serried ranks, were visually like a sombre cloud of browns and blacks. This week the Central Hall was a sea of bright colours. It showed me that no revolution has been so complete in recent years as that in the colour of women's dresses.

* * *

Many members of the human race obviously find it extremely difficult to accommodate themselves to the encroachments of civilisation, as any one may learn by observing the sanguinary gesticulations of Nazis in Germany. I notice the same difficulty in the animal world, though it manifests itself in different ways. The other day I suddenly came upon a large tortoise in the grass by the side of a Sussex main road, apparently occupied in trying to eat a paper bag. Where he came from I do not know, but he has now found, I hope, permanent sanctuary from the dangers of civilisation in my garden. A friend of mine, a lady who lives not far from London, told me of an even more curious experience. Early the other morning she was woken up by the continual banging of a tin can on stones in the garden outside her window. On looking out, she saw a small animal with its head wedged into a small milk can, frantically beating the can on the path in its efforts to extricate itself. Civilisation has taught my friend two things, to be extraordinarily humane and at the same time to be terrified of all non-domesticated animals, such as mice, rats, beetles, stoats. She was in a quandary. It might be a rat or even a stoat! So she got up, dressed, and sent for the gardener. But the gardener took an unconscionable time in coming, and meanwhile the hammer, hammer, hammer of the can on the path got on her nerves. The civilised woman's humanity overcame the civilised woman's terror of "animals." She went into the garden and took a nearer look. The unfortunate brute who had not yet learnt the elementary lesson of civilisation—that it is dangerous to allow one's love of milk to insert one's head into tin cans—saw a hedgehog. The lady now became quite brave; gingerly holding the can, she shook it until the hedgehog fell out. He was at first somewhat dazed by his contact with cans and civilisation, but he recovered after a bit and took himself off, a sadder, but more experienced hedgehog.

As an example of the way the English language can be used, a correspondent sends me the following from the English section of the *Diario de Noticias* published in Madeira.

TO WHOM IT MAY INTEREST AND FOR THE BEST OFFERS.

Tested recipes of James and marmelade.
Will keeps.

* * *

Hurrying across Berkeley Square yesterday I saw Lord Michelham, who has just taken a house in London, having sold his Leicestershire home. He has taken only a small house, not from any real reasons of economy, but because he rather likes his friends to come in and say: "Oh, I should have thought with all your money you would have taken a much larger house." His yacht is being got ready at Southampton.—Daily paper.

* * *

This made me feel that some great deed of heroism might rouse India and make them remember that, though they are of a different race, they are British subjects under the King of England, who is Emperor of India, *and what more can they want?*—Lady Houston in the *Sphere*, explaining why she financed the Everest Expedition The italics are hers.

* * *

At Clerkenwell Police Court nine summonses for offences against the Shops Act against Annie Cioffi, the proprietress of two cafes in Chapel Street, Islington, N., were heard. It was stated that assistants were employed from 7 a.m. to midnight at 25*s.* a week and their food, and that they were only allowed ten minutes or a quarter of an hour for meals. The total number of hours worked in a week was 109, the maximum under the Act being seventy-four. Imposing fines totalling 22*s.* 6*d.*, Mr. Pope, the magistrate, said that people coming to this country, determined to make a living in a strange land, often set a *brilliant example of hard work to our* countrymen, but Mrs. Cioffi must realise that the provisions of the Shops Act should be observed.—Daily paper.

* * *

King Feisul will see some of the fastest warships in the world. This spectacle will be a fitting prelude to the rest of his visit.—*Daily Mail.*

* * *

The Heyford, for its load and speed, presents a smaller projected area than any other aircraft in existence. This, together with its silence, gives it a better opportunity of penetrating enemy defences without being discovered than any bombers hitherto produced . . . *Absence of vice* is important in all Service aircraft, but especially in the night bomber class.—From the *Handley Page Bulletin.*

* * *

I take this from a circular letter appealing for Parish funds.

There come times in the lives of all parishioners when they are only too pleased to avail themselves of the privilege which their Parish Church and Churchyard offer . . . CRITIC

## TEMPERANCE IN TARIFFS

*It is not tariffs which are causing the harm but excessive tariffs. . . . The first hold the ring clear for fair and reasonable competition . . . the second are deliberately calculated to establish a home monopoly.—Morning Post*, June 19th.

THE good or ill of a tariff (Free Traders note, if you please!)
Was never a matter of dogma; the question turns on degrees—
Like strychnine, good as a tonic in illness, which, none the less,
Is hurtful rather than helpful to those who drink to excess.

There's moderation in all things; no tariffs ought to be made
A means for the home producer to skim the cream of the trade.
No home producer would wish it; you'll hear them loudly declare
Their liking for competition—if the competition is fair.

Which means, I take it, a duty that's just sufficiently high
To indicate to the buyer that British is best to buy,
And offset the mean advantage, in getting an order placed,
Of cheapness, or pushful selling, or suiting the public taste.

While as for British exporters, there's nothing on earth they ask
From our diplomats and our statesmen, excepting the simple task
Of seeing that tariff ramparts are nowhere raised to a height
That handicaps British traders in selling their goods at sight.

So here's a chance for the Conference—'tis easy for them to show
That only excessive choking can stifle trade in its flow;
And as for *what* is excessive, there seems no need for debate,
For the folk who ask for protection will settle a "moderate" rate.

MACFLECKNOE

# GETTING THINGS DONE

MR. CLENNELL WILKINSON, referring the other day to the often-heard remark that what we need is a Mussolini or another Cromwell, asked why on earth anybody should want a man like Cromwell. A correspondent immediately replied: "The answer is a simple one. He succeeded, where others failed, in getting things done." There is a positive craze for getting things done sweeping over the world to-day. It does not seem to matter much what the things are as long as somebody gets them done. Thus in one country the man who gets things done is the man who gets Jews hit over the head with rubber tubing. In another he is the man who gets peasants torn from their farms and sent to work as exiles in distant places not of their own choosing, but of his. It is sometimes very difficult to see the difference between getting things done and getting people done in. The man who gets things done is not, as a rule, afflicted with humanity. He is so bent on getting somewhere that he has no time to consider the feelings of the people he knocks down on the way there. I wish I knew enough history to be able to expose the pretensions of the great men who got things done in the past. Perhaps, however, it would be useless, for the men who got things done, from Cleon to Napoleon, will always have their defenders simply because they got things done.

I dislike men who get things done, because one of the first things they always do in modern times is to muzzle the press. Give a man dictatorial powers and he immediately thinks what a fine piece of work it would be to suppress a few newspapers. Now, newspapers may be an evil, but I doubt if they are as great an evil as men who get things done, and if either must be suppressed, I should infinitely prefer the suppression of the latter. All the people who get things done, I notice, have a mania for destroying things. They must destroy free institutions or libraries or churches in order to get rid of their superfluous energy. Satan finds some mischief still for active hands to do. It would, of course, be unfair to suggest that the strong men of politics have no positive aim in their frenzied activities; but I cannot help thinking that what many people admire in them is less their ultimate purpose than their frenzied activities. The strong man pleases the imagination much as the gangster of the films does. Nearly everybody except the poets believes that life proceeds at much too slow a pace and that we should be far happier if it were made more dramatic. "Let's do something," they cry; and when a strong man claps his opponents into gaol they applaud him as though he had done as good service to the community as the village blacksmith.

You can see how much of the admiration of the strong man is due to his destructiveness in the way in which many people express their enthusiasm for Cromwell. There is nothing for which they commend him more ardently than for saying "Take away that bauble." That was getting things done. I cannot myself see why it should be getting things done to remove the mace from the House of Commons but not getting things done to leave it there. Yet leaving the mace where it is does not somehow fire the imagination. All the English statesmen who have left the mace in its usual place—Peel, Disraeli and Gladstone—seem feeble politicians in comparison with the giant who had the strength of mind to order its removal. Mr. Churchill, I am sure, owes his appeal to many ardent spirits to the feeling that he is the only man living who is capable at a crisis of doing something about the mace. Yet in itself there is nothing more admirable in removing the mace than in burning down Westminster Abbey. Would a man who set fire to Westminster Abbey, however, be regarded as a man of action, and must we who refrain from burning it down be content to be looked on as sluggards incapable of action? There seems to me to be much to be said for the man of inaction. The man of inaction has preserved many fine buildings, many fine institutions, many fine libraries, many fine gardens. One of them, Abraham Lincoln, even won the American Civil War.

It would, I admit, be possible to carry one's admiration for the man of inaction too far. The craving for getting things done is balanced in most of us by the craving for leaving things undone; and the more comfortable we are, the more the temptation to leave things undone is likely to grow on us. At the same time, the history of Fabius Cunctator, known also as the Lamb, is a permanent warning to us that we must be particularly on our guard against the man who gets things done. As every schoolboy knows, so dilatory were the tactics of Fabius in the war against Carthage that all Rome denounced him and called for a man who could get things done. Such a man was Minucius Rufus, who got things done so effectively that Fabius had to extricate him from disaster. Later on, in the absence of Fabius, other men who could get things done lost the Battle of Cannæ in the most practical fashion possible. If posterity's estimate of Fabius is just, it looks as though occasionally the best way to get something done may be to keep the men who get things done from having anything to do with it.

I do not know the Platonic Dialogues well enough to be able to say whether Socrates ever conversed with an advocate of the gospel of getting things done. He would certainly, had he had the opportunity, have examined him closely as to what things should be done, and as to whether he thought that it mattered by what means they were done, and he would have concluded by compelling him to agree that what the virtuous man must desire is to have the right things done at the right time and in the right way. Possibly he would have exposed him in the course of the argument as a man whose inmost longing was not for justice but for a theatrical way of living. Do not suppose that I am speaking of the great reformers, the men and women who are outraged by the continuance of a plague of poverty in a world of plenty, and who are unselfishly devoting their energies to the work of building a civilisation in which such things are impossible. Do not even suppose that I am speaking of Mussolini, or Stalin, or Hitler. I am thinking rather of that enormous number of men and women who have an unholy craving to be led by a strong, ruthless man, and who go about saying "What we want is a Mussolini" or a Cromwell or some other dictator. These men and women, I am convinced, are inspired largely by a passion for the theatrical. They want a leader who can make life more exciting for them. Many of them are in revolt, less against anything in the framework of society than against the dullness of their own lives. They have lost the taste for the politics of the four-wheeled-cab kind, and long for motor-racing-track politics, which will bring sensational thrills into public life.

If I were a candidate without any political convictions and eager only to get into Parliament, I think I should publish an election-poster announcing that my policy was a policy of action, and should leave the electors to guess what, if any, were the other items of my programme. In every speech I should say: "What we need is a man who can get things done. Is the Prime Minister such a man? Is Mr. Lansbury such a man? No. Ladies and gentlemen, if you do me the honour of returning me to the House of Commons I promise you I will make it my first and only business, from the moment I enter it, to get things done. We have had enough

of words, words, words. What we want is not words but deeds. What most of us feel is that it is time this great Empire got a move on. There can be no standing still. My policy is a policy of Forward, and my motto is 'Action, action, action!' The present crisis calls, as all great crises have called, for a Man. Send twenty Men to the House of Commons, and that old lady will begin to sit up. What we've got to do, ladies and gentlemen, is to get together, and when we've got together it must follow, as the night the day, that we'll get things done. Let's all put our shoulders to the wheel. Let's step on the gas. Let us, if necessary, throw away the brake. Forward, ladies and gentlmen, to a new and better world!" I do not imagine that I could get away with this fatuous speech myself. I am convinced, however, that, if a man could be found who was fool enough to be able to believe what he was saying, and if he uttered just such empty phrases, bawling them out at the top of a powerful voice, with his eyes bulging out of their sockets and the veins standing out on his temples, he would in time gather a great crowd round him and end as a Member of Parliament. For what we need is a Man. Only if we discover a Man can we be sure of getting things done. And so forth.

Y. Y.

# Correspondence

## DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

SIR,—Your excellent leading article on the so-called "split" in the Labour Party gives the dispute its right proportions. The existence of controversy in a progressive party between right and left wing is, however, a healthy sign. Absence of controversy generally denotes apathy. Sir Stafford Cripps has rendered a service in emphasising the need for new methods. I myself pointed out in an article in the *Contemporary* only last February that if the Labour Party thought it was going to introduce Socialism with the present parliamentary machine it deserved to be laughed out of court. "What is wanted," I wrote, "is dictatorial power without a personal dictator, stability for a course of years to try out and establish firmly the projects devised."

We may legitimately have differences of opinion as to the actual methods and stages of our proposed changes, but that some of them must be drastic and immediate there can be no manner of doubt. With former experiences vividly in our recollection we know where the danger lies. Now is the time to dispose of the idea that the next Labour Government should, on assuming office, acquiesce in all the old traditions, buy their gold coats and show how nicely they can conform to the recognised methods and practices handed down from the past.

When a machine cannot do the work required of it it stands to reason you must construct another. We do not use motor cars for flying.

PONSONBY

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SIR,—Happening at the moment to be reading the *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith* and having just passed Mr. J. A. Spender's long and interesting account of the 1911 struggle with the House of Lords, I was rather surprised to find this entirely ignored in your leading article.

In your third paragraph you anticipate another possible conflict with the Peers, and for a way out you hark back to Lord Grey and 1832, instead of to the Parliament Act of 1911 which was expressly designed to provide a better solution than the creation of extra Peers. The Parliament Act, I think, enacts that if a Bill is passed by the House of Commons in three successive Sessions, and two years have elapsed since the Second Reading in the first Session, it automatically becomes law whether the Peers like it or not. I should be glad to be corrected if I am wrong.

The only reason I can at present assign for your choice of precedent is that the Parliament Act procedure is too slow for politicians in a hurry, and that in order to get on with their job they would probably rather revive the clumsy, if constitutional, device of swamping the House of Lords with an *ad hoc* creation of Peers—a device for which Asquith was at such pains to find a more fit substitute, and which was so reluctantly consented to both by William IV and by our late and present King.

The Angel Hotel, W. S. GODFREY
Bury St. Edmund's.

SIR,—Your article, "Democrats and Dictators," has a significance not confined to the present dissensions within the Labour Party. The average elector may well doubt, at the present time, whether his vote is of any use to decide this or lesser issues. Should such vote be cast for the Conservative Party he may be assisting towards anything from Fascist dictatorship on the Right to moderate Socialism on the Left. Similarly a vote for Labour may produce something of paler pink than the Conservative Left to Communistic tendencies or dictatorship from its advanced section. When these parties cannot decide for themselves where they stand they can hardly expect enthusiasm from the electorate. Moreover, the supporters of both can only end with a feeling of disillusion and drift further right or left, according to their views. Such a state prolonged must lead to dictatorship.

The present position with regard to India is, of course, another outstanding example of party chaos. We have seen similar futility in European countries end in dictatorships. Is it not time that the democrats of both parties proved that democracy is worth keeping by producing clean cut and definite policies?

St. Mary's Grange, PHILIP S. MUMFORD
Easthorpe, Kelvedon.

## THE IRISH TARIFF WAR

SIR,—Does not the pressure of the World Economic Conference suggest the necessity for an effort to allay the suicidal rigours of the tariff war between Great Britain and the Irish Free State? A tariff war, destructive of an old-established trade and both declared and conducted for political reasons, cannot look well to the assembled statesmen and economists of the civilised world—especially having regard to the declared object of the Conference and to Great Britain's prominent participation in its inauguration and proceedings. Nor let it be forgotten at whose door the "war-guilt" in this case lies. Whilst Great Britain and the Irish Free State were both engaged in devising fiscal measures for the protection and encouragement of domestic production in their respective territories, a dispute—a justiciable dispute as to their respective obligations under recorded documents—arose between them. Both accepted the principle of arbitration, but whilst the Irish Free State demanded an unrestricted arbitration, Great Britain insisted upon a tribunal limited to her own nationals. On this issue, and to enforce its own view, Great Britain, with the assent of Parliament, launched a campaign of tariffs against Irish imports. The Irish Free State retaliated to the best of its ability and with alacrity. It already hankered after economic self-sufficiency; and it was determined, if possible, to remove all chance of ever again being exposed to so painful and damaging an attack.

There are those whose deprecation of British policy in this affair is tempered by the notion that at any rate Ireland is suffering more than Great Britain. It may be that some of the discussions at the Conference have opened their eyes to the fact that there is another side to the picture. Britain's balance of trade and payments is the most crucial point in her world position—so crucial indeed that it is less talked about than its intrinsic importance would seem to require. Let us see how it is affected by the Anglo-Irish tariff war. The April Trade Returns were illuminating.

For the three month period (January-March) the total turnover of Anglo-Irish trade was £18,045,580 in 1931. In 1933 it amounted to £9,056,382. Be it noted that in both cases British exports to Ireland exceeded Irish imports into Britain. Is it a triumph to have cut down by one-half a large trade turn-over in which British exports predominated? Again, let it be remembered that this does not complete the tale of Britain's loss from this tariff warfare. The whole of the freights and insurance on Anglo-Irish trade are earned by Britain. Is the loss of these freights and insurances on cargoes representing £9 millions per quarter an insignificant loss? And, further, Irish capital in large amounts being invested in London, the Irish Free State is a creditor country *vis-à-vis* Great Britain. If payment by exports to Ireland be checked, the possibility of the removal of Irish balances in cash either for expenditure at home or for investment abroad may have to be faced. Mr. Chamberlain's recent circular to the City shows how very embarrassing such a development might be.

Now is not all this mutual throat-cutting in the economic sphere clearly the very worst of bad business for all concerned? And if the original cause of dispute is not susceptible of immediate settlement—and it is hard to see why it should not be—ought not peace to be re-established, in trade arrangements at least, for everyone's benefit without delay? And is it not quite clear that

the moral argument in favour of peace as bearing upon Britain's position before the World Economic Conference is heavily reinforced by a consideration of her material interests in the light of the recent returns of Trade and Navigation?

London HENRY HARRISON

## THE PROSPECTS OF HITLERISM

SIR,—The observations that Mr. Clifford Sharp has made as a result of a ten days' visit to Berlin seem to me to throw much more light upon his own state of mind than upon that of the German people. In a country whose people have been cowed into speaking in whispers, whose intellectuals are imprisoned, whose press is muzzled, and whose Government is founded upon terrorism, it would require a much longer period than ten days, a more extensive exploration than that confined to the capital, and a more varied, critical, and searching investigation than that apparently conducted by Mr. Sharp to yield results affording any reliable guidance as to the present situation and probable developments. The fact that he "found no German who dreamed of the possibility of war within the next ten or fifteen years at any rate" reveals the narrow limitations of his inquiry and also his own remarkable naivety.

Mr. Sharp's explanation of the Nazi Jew-baiting crusade is as novel as it is unfounded. I am pretty well acquainted with Nazi literature and with the many base slanders hurled against the Jews, but do not remember having come across that particular trinity—"food profiteers, usurers, anti-national intriguers"—before. Could Mr. Sharp substantiate those charges, and would he kindly explain what he means by "anti-national intriguers"? Supposing, for argument's sake, that those charges had some substance, could not the ordinary law have been applied against the delinquents? And can the alleged misdeeds of the anonymous few be advanced as a justification for the persecution and degradation of a community of 600,000 souls, who have rendered valuable and lasting services to Germany's intellectual and economic life? If Mr. Sharp will take the trouble to study the Programme of the Nazi Party, formulated and adopted in 1920, he will find that the prime cause of the Nazi hostility to the Jew is his race and not his alleged mode of activity either in the economic or the political world. The deadly sin that Hitler finds in the Jew is simply his blood, and he finds it equally in the Christian grandchildren of a baptised Jew. Has Mr. Sharp heard nothing at all about the Aryan craze of the swastika worshippers?

When Mr. Sharp speaks of Hitler as "the National Prophet of an exceedingly serious people" it is obvious that he is utterly blind to the realities of the situation. Hitler's authority does not rest upon the free acceptance of a majority of the German people, but upon the support of his private army of half a million mercenary brown-shirted bullies. Let that army be dissolved, and even Mr. Sharp may recognise in Hitler the False Prophet who has wrought untold injury to the country of which he became a naturalised citizen only a year or two ago. ENOCH SCRIBE

## "IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE"

SIR,—Had the review of my book, *Germany under the Treaty*, bearing the foregoing heading appeared in a journal of less influence I could well have afforded to differ from it in silence. But I feel that it would be misleading to allow it to pass unnoticed. I think I have fair ground for complaint that the reviewer criticises the book not from the standpoint of its author's clearly defined purpose but in accordance with his own idea of what that purpose should have been. I make it perfectly plain at the outset that the book is designed simply to discuss the annexations and their results, and I speak of it as formulating the "case for Germany." Was not that object perfectly justifiable? I have written exactly what I wished and intended to write, and if I were to do the work again it would be done on the same lines. The reason for giving the book its existing form is the fact that Germany's case against the annexations was not considered at Versailles before the Treaty was drawn up, though every one of the old and new States which were to be augmented at her expense was allowed and even invited to put forward claims in its own way. The Allied Powers gave to the world only the case against Germany as they had arbitrarily framed it, for though powerful and invincible refutations were submitted by the German Government, for the most part they were withheld from public knowledge. That was both an ungenerous and a cowardly course of action. Nor should it be forgotten that the Treaty of Versailles was avowedly justified by the untrue allegation of Germany's sole "war guilt," and that many of its provisions grossly violate the conditions which had been solemnly accepted by both sides as the basis of the peace settlement. Remembering all this, was it not highly desirable that the German case against the annexation should be presented, fortified by a candid and authenticated statement of the effects which have followed them? If in recounting my experiences "emotion" has not been kept altogether in the background the facts themselves afford sufficient reason.

In view of these circumstances I submit that your reviewer's charge of "bias" is irrelevant, and does not call for a rejoinder. Nevertheless, I would like to refer briefly to several minor points. My critic does not put the issue accurately when he asks the question, "Is it really justifiable to subject Poles to Germans because Germans are more cultured?" I might fairly remind him that the indigenous populations of the greater part of the British Empire are subject to our race because their culture is in general regarded as inferior to our own. It is a more apposite reply to say that, while Poles were never put under Germans for the reason he suggests, it is a fact that the vast majority of those who were German nationals until 1920 were raised to their present cultural and material level under Prussian and German influence. The strongest argument against the Treaty of Versailles is the fact that it has put millions of Germans under races of a lower intellectual, social, and political development. Justice apart, the interests of civilisation are not to be advanced by such measures. But, further, as my book plainly states, it is part of the settlement of compromise which I envisage that European racial minorities everywhere should be reduced to the smallest possible compass by means of generous schemes for the exchange of population. It is a pity that your reviewer should have overlooked the many pages which are devoted to this and other positive proposals for the alleviation of the follies and injustices of the Treaty of Versailles. Finally, I am altogether unconscious of having specially favoured the views of German Social Democrats, and of any possible motive for doing it. If they have been quoted here and there the reason is that in making social investigations abroad I have never lost sight of the standpoint of the working classes. W. H. DAWSON

Headington, Oxford.

## LONDON SQUARES

SIR,—Some fortunate people during this hot summer have found a moment's respite under the shade of the trees in one of the London squares. Many of them will leave town in August and September; but the gates will remain locked and the gardens unused. The sensible and humane suggestion is now made that the squares should be opened during August, and perhaps part of July and September, to some of those who would otherwise have no place to walk or sit in but the streets. The Square Committees have, of course, to give their consent, but it is hard to believe that this will be withheld. And there must be many who would be willing, if the squares were thrown open as suggested, to contribute towards the sum needed for their upkeep. In this belief, at least, may I draw your readers' attention to the scheme and add that further details can be had from The London Council of Social Service, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2?

52 Tavistock Square, W.C.1. VIRGINIA WOOLF

## STANDARDS OF CRITICISM

SIR,—I have twice reread Dr. Leavis' introduction to *Towards Standards of Criticism*. If Dr. Leavis says I have misunderstood him, I must have done so. But if what he has written is intended to have any meaning at all it seems to me to have the meaning I gave it. On p. 11 he hints that "the Marxist conclusion" may have to be accepted, and in the context it can only be assumed that he considers that *The Calendar* might succeed in such an atmosphere. On pp. 13, 14, he again hints in a coy aposiopesis that educational authorities might be of assistance and on p. 2 writes "the bound volumes of *The Calendar* have been serving a certain educational purpose incomparably well." This sentence will perhaps show how difficult it is to find definite meaning in what Dr. Leavis writes. The "certain educational purpose" could not easily be left more uncertain.

In *How to Teach Reading*, pp. 5, 6, Dr. Leavis quotes with approval an attack by Mr. Pound on academic English courses in general. The rest of the book is a suggested remedy. What applies to English courses in general, applies also to Cambridge, where the teaching may be more enlightened but the syllabus is still as stupid as elsewhere. Mr. Lucas in the essay to which I referred examines the Cambridge course in particular, and what he

says in criticism resembles but is deeper and more detailed than Mr. Pound's emotional outburst. But though the criticisms are similar, the remedial proposals are quite different. If I implied that they were similar, I owe an apology both to Dr. Leavis and Mr. Lucas. The proposals are as different from one another as humanism from religion. ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL

30 Well Walk, N.W.3.

## SHORT-SIGHTED AMERICA

SIR,—May I correct an error in the printing of my review of Mr. Nicolson's book in your last number? That review contains this sentence, "The treatment of debts was all important, and when that question was raised America was at first considered as short-sighted as any of the Powers whose territorial greed she blamed." The words "America was at first considered as short-sighted" should be "America was as self-regarding and short-sighted." J. L. HAMMOND

Oatfield, Piccotts End,
Hemel Hempsted, Herts.

## THE HENDON WAR PAGEANT

SIR,—The Hendon Air Pageant on June 24th coincides with a great deal of critical discussion regarding aerial disarmament.

As the British Government has made clear its intention to retain aerial bombardment "for police purposes in outlying regions" it is perhaps a pity that the Hendon displays have not included a demonstration of such police work in recent years. In 1927 the Air Ministry constructed what was officially described as a "barbarian city" where European missionaries and traders were supposed to be menaced by a wave of "unrest." The missionaries and traders having been successfully evacuated, this eastern town was bombed by R.A.F. planes with such skill that all but the church (presumably the property of the missionaries) was reduced to ruins.

The repetition of such a display would at least make clear to the public what is meant by "police purposes" where the coloured races are concerned. When Sir Philip Sassoon (then Under-Secretary for Air) was asked in the House whether the bombing of a village was suitable for young children to witness, he replied: "Certainly"; which was at least a logical answer if such bombing is to be considered a desirable practice in itself. The same logic applied to the pageant of 1929, when the R.A.F. delighted the spectators with an aerial attack upon a foreign Power which was supposed to have committed an act of aggression "without waiting for the decision of the League of Nations."

Unfortunately the trend of recent years points to the fact that the sentimentalists will have their way and the pageant, instead of showing war, police-work or the application of "sanctions," will in all probability be nothing but a highly spectacular aerial circus. The reality of aerial warfare is something on which numerous experts have already written enough to destroy all the glamour in such a pageant. Sir Alan Cobham told us six years ago that London could be "blown to smithereens" by enemy aircraft, and that it was practically impossible to defend it from such a fate. On the police functions of the R.A.F., Lord Lloyd (who can hardly be accused of being "pro-native") commented in the House of Lords that "Air control can never civilise or pacify a country."

To protest against the romantic misrepresentations of the Hendon display the delegates of 380 organisations in Greater London recently pledged themselves to support the Hendon Anti-War Committee in a campaign against the pageant.

The No More War Movement, REGINALD A. REYNOLDS
11 Doughty Street, W.C.1.

## A MATTER OF TASTE

SIR,—According to legend, English people are paragons of respectability and (except when they can put in a week-end on the Continent) prudish to the point of Puritanism, whereas the French are gay dogs, veritable Tristram Shandies, always indulging in sly winks, significant guffaws, and spicy *double-entendre*. Yet there is a film enjoying a respectable run at the Academy, *Virtuous Isidore*, which, going the rounds in France, was vigorously condemned in the press, and the authorities in a number of towns insisted upon its withdrawal. It is, of course, purely a matter of taste, but so much for a legend. MONTGOMERY BELGION

Savile Club.

# Miscellany

## CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS AT THE COUNTY HALL

THERE is on view at the L.C.C. County Hall an exhibition of drawings by children of the L.C.C. schools which ought to be visited by all interested in art and especially those who are concerned with teaching it. Miss Richardson, who is the inspector of the L.C.C. schools in the matter of drawing, has managed to inspire the teachers of elementary schools in London with certain principles which she has gradually elaborated through many years of teaching in the provinces. It would be a mistake to describe them as methods of teaching art since they are even more methods of avoiding teaching it, and also of somehow protecting the children from outside influences so that they can give play to their own intensely acute sensations, particularly their sensations of colour. I expect everyone can remember the intense passionate feelings that they had for colour in childhood, that it was a positive hunger and necessity, that one enjoyed certain pure colours and certain simple harmonies with as much vehemence and literal *greed* as one enjoyed certain tastes.

And I think this was at its intensest at about the age of six, so that one of the trials of life was that it was held to be immoral to wallow in the sensual delights of colour until one had gone through the pains of drawing. On the other hand, even the child discovers that merely to slop about with bright colour on a sheet of paper does not satisfy him. Now Miss Richardson has discovered a way to give satisfaction to this overpowering desire of infancy for colour. The children are all more or less familiar with some written letters, they can at least make the preliminary pot-hooks and so she gets them to make patterns by using these simple and easily-made forms in different combinations and then filling in the spaces with colour.

It is an extraordinary sight to see the children from the drabbest slums of the East End painting away at these designs which they have made without any help. Their passionate concentration is unbelievable unless seen. They grudge every moment of the rest intervals and rush back to work, and the mothers complain that they linger on long after school hours. Nor need the visitor fear to disturb them at their work for they never look up and hardly deign to answer if spoken to.

Now what is so extraordinary about these works is that among the hundreds and hundreds that I have seen, I have hardly ever seen a single colour discord, and I have seen such subtle and unexpected felicities as make an artist feel a pang of envy. And yet one has only to look at a book of wall-paper patterns or of sample decorator's colours to know that the average adult Englishman has as much idea of colour as an old boot.

This is surely an interesting discovery. It suggests that the harmonies accepted by artists correspond to some fundamental, natural, instinctive reaction, but that our education and the traditions and examples of modern civilisation always distort it so that the artist's job is, as in so many things, merely to get back to the simplest, most immediate and native reaction. Many of the designs which come from these infant schools might be translated into the most beautiful textiles with only the slightest adjustment and arrangement, and they certainly would refresh our jaded industrial art with some delightful and unexpected discoveries.

But the charm and surprise of this infant work should not blind us to what is in its way even more remarkable, namely, the fact that children taught according to Miss Richardson's principles continue to do most interesting work long after that flowering-time of infancy. Generally the overwhelming influx of ideas and facts which are necessary to fit the child for social life, more or less completely destroy the acuteness of and even the desire for aesthetic satisfaction. In proportion as

the world is perceived intellectually the immediate sensual response to things becomes enfeebled. I have nearly always noticed that children from twelve to sixteen scarcely ever express themselves in drawing with any sincerity or simplicity. They generally pick up the worst aesthetic slang of the moment and bring it out proudly but quite ineffectively. Now, even through this dangerous age, many of these children seem able to keep alight the sacred flame and to incorporate more and more of their new knowledge and understanding of life in their designs. In short, they are already on the way to become artists.

ROGER FRY

# A REGIMENT OF BEASTS

**New Gallery: "Zoo in Budapest."**
**Plaza: "The King of the Jungle."**

> Bears, Tygers, Ounces, Pards
> Gambold before them, th' unweildy Elephant
> To make them mirth us'd all his might and wreath'd
> His Lithe Proboscis: close the Serpent sly
> Insinuating.
>
> *Paradise Lost.*

FOR some years the Brutes appeared upon the film with the pretence of providing information. As we wandered through the jungle with Trader Horn or one of his innumerable Sosies, an occasion was continually found for improving our minds. With the arrival of Tarzan, however, this form of animal picture was doomed to death. The animals now exist on the screen to "make us mirth." The Zoo has supplanted the forest.

The two films, at the head of this paragraph, have certain resemblances and each has abundant merit. Both deal with life in a Zoo; the hero of each has a wonderful gift with animals; in each case the animals are, with exceptions, more sympathetic than the human beings; in each case the film ends with a series of extraordinary animal fights.

But *Zoo in Budapest* is the better of the two pictures, better in story, in photography, in setting and in character. The Budapest, unlike the Californian Zoo of *King of the Jungle*, resembles the Zoo in *Paradise Lost*. Universal happiness reigns; and the animals spend their time being hugged and kissed by the quite delightful hero. The tone of *Zoo in Budapest* is sentimental; the *King of the Jungle*, for all its romantic theme, is a farce. Nothing can apparently interfere with the bliss of the Budapest Zoo, which is run on the principles of the most expensive nursing homes, and must reduce the most callous to a condition of maudlin animal loving. As the hero says: "There is nothing here a child need be frightened of." What more could man desire than to live for ever in this "summer isle of Eden"? Yet as we know, "even in Paradise" God "designed the snake." The tiger has for long nourished an intense antipathy for the elephant, which it has needed all the hero's immense diplomatic skill to keep under control. Finally when, owing to the exigencies of the plot, a child and a heroine have succeeded in getting locked up in the Zoo for the night, the tiger is able to get out of its cage and makes for the elephant. In a few moments pandemonium is let loose and beast fights with beast in realistic warfare. The worst horrors are finally avoided owing to the vast wisdom and strategic sense of the elephants, who succeed in isolating the combatants; yet at the end you feel that life can never quite be what it was before.

*The King of the Jungle* is not so imaginative as *Zoo in Budapest*. The story is of the super Tarzan kind and deals with the adventures of a superb athlete who has been brought up by lions. The hero and his pride of favourite lions are trapped in Kenya and taken across America in a circus, where the animals are ill-treated by visitors and keepers alike. Were it not for the heroine, the hero would die of despair. Fortunately, just at this moment the circus catches fire. Animals fly howling in every direction. Beast falls on beast. A lion saves the heroine from a maddened tiger; and as the curtain falls, hero, heroine and troupe of lions are back again on the Kenya reservation. The photography is good, and the dialogue snappy. The morals are also pleasing. *The King of the Jungle* is a "very good show," but it does not invent a world as does *Zoo in Budapest*, about which there is a touch of beauty which raises it above the ordinary run of romantic films. One feels that the camera man of *Zoo in Budapest* really respects animals, while the camera man of *King of the Jungle* is merely exploiting their obvious appeal.

FRANCIS BIRRELL

# EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

**Simon Bussy and Tissot** (Leicester Galleries):
**Max Ernst** (Mayor Galleries):

ACCORDING to Mr. Sickert, Dégas, when a picture pleased him, used to exclaim with passion, "C'est de la peinture!" The three artists whose names stand at the head of this article have little in common with each other, either in kind or merit, but of each one might say "Ce n'est pas de la peinture." This is not necessarily an insult. M. Bussy's pastels of animals are certainly works of art, but in order to enjoy them we must not regard them as paintings, but as exquisite bibelots. They are conceived as bibelots. For example, the main subject has no more than a decorative relation to its background. It stands out as a flat pattern against an equally flat mass of colour, and usually it is isolated before its background, just as an inlaid marble fruit or flower may stand in elegant isolation on the lid of a Victorian box. And these pastels are executed with all the impersonality and technical skill of an *intarsiatore*. If one did not read on the catalogue that they were pastels we should hardly ask how these astonishing objects came into existence, so successfully has M. Bussy concealed every trace of the human hand. Only in two slight and charming studies of the sea (18 and 46) has he left some evidence of his touch, and I must confess that they are the drawings in this exhibition which I prefer, though they are clearly the farthest from his main intention. In his Zoo studies M. Bussy has found the right subjects for his impersonal, decorative treatment. The birds and beasts he has chosen to represent—cockatoos, penguins, toucans, tortoises—are almost bibelots in themselves, and he has made them more precious by selecting their most characteristic moments and seeing in them analogies to other decorative forms. His Tortoise (42) has the quality of old lacquer, his Bird of Paradise (14) is a Venetian courtesan, his White Cockatoo (33) a famous hostess. In his studies of Morocco, where the subject gives less opportunity for wit, I cannot always understand M. Bussy's aims. Perhaps illustrated Bibles, date-boxes and oriental romances have prejudiced me too strongly against all representations of the Near East; or perhaps there is something inherently unpictorial in the contrast of blue sky and white houses, which, more than religious beliefs, accounts for the abstract art of Islam.

The works of James Tissot, shown in the next gallery, can safely be left to look after themselves. Everyone will enjoy this vision of the '70s, so remote, so romantic, brought before our eyes in such profuse and elegant detail: everyone, that is, whose teeth are not set on edge by bad painting. Not that Tissot was incompetent in any branch of the art. In almost all his work the drawing is correct and the limited range of types well expressed. The "Officers and Ladies on Board H.M.S. Calcutta" is a graceful composition, and his frequent use of rigging to give a variety of texture to his backgrounds is something of an invention. But with one exception his pictures show an insensibility of touch, tone and colour, which must repel all but the most hardened Romantics. Would he have done better if he had studied in France, and submitted himself to the influence of Manet and the Impressionists? The Manet-like drawing of Lady Mary Craven (3) and the impressionistic Henley Regatta (1) suggests that he might. As it is he must be judged by the standard of his English

rivals, of his predecessor Frith and his successor Orchardson. He is inferior to both. Frith was a far solider painter with a greater range of sympathy and mastery of expression. Orchardson was more sensitive with a delicate touch and scale of tones, which would make Tissot look wooden and photographic. There are few pictures I cannot enjoy, but Tissot's "Empress Eugenie" (23) and "Autumn on the River" (24), defeat me. They are as loathsome in colour and quality as the most advanced surrealist, and would fill M. Salvador Dali with envy and despair.

This indeed is the place to write about the surrealist who is now holding an exhibition in London, Herr Max Ernst. He is a painter of European reputation, and Mr. Paul Nash is right to be annoyed at the way in which this exhibition has been ignored. But I think that Mr. Nash is wrong in seeing this negligence as part of an organised campaign against Modern Art. Actually it is due to fear. I suppose that the majority of visitors to the Mayor Galleries feel completely bewildered, but are too disillusioned, perhaps too callous, to shake their umbrellas at the pictures or to stamp on their catalogues. And the critics are too much afraid. They have been caught out so often, and it is unwise to disagree with a body of informed opinion. However, a critic is paid to say what he feels, and so I must confess that before Max Ernst's pictures I feel nothing whatsoever except a mild distaste for their shapes and colours. In a sense this is irrelevant, because these pictures must not be judged by the standard of earlier abstract art. There have been many schools of painting both in Europe and China, which were admired, almost entirely for their subject matter, and for 200 years "ut pictura poesis" was the corner stone of art criticism. It has long seemed probable that a reaction against our too exclusively sensational theories of art would reinstate the Subject as the most important part of painting. On such grounds one could write an eloquent defence of Max Ernst; but it would not survive a visit to his exhibition. Whatever his pictures have to say to us, they can only say it through our senses, and these are so insulted by his mode of delivery that in my case they refuse to transmit his message. As for his literary content, it suffers from the defects (I have implied that it lacks the qualities) of Mallarmé's poetry, in that the symbols used are so personal that very few people can hope to understand them. Perhaps the real trouble is that Max Ernst has not felt his symbols strongly enough. Botticelli, at the end of a lifetime of passionate experience, could give to fluttering hands or swirling draperies an almost magical power over our minds. But only men of great spiritual force have been able to give abstract shapes such universal significance, and men incapable of intensity who use this difficult language must not complain if they are not understood.

KENNETH CLARKE

## THE BALLETS JOOSS

KURT JOOSS has been known to Purcell lovers since 1926, when, in collaboration with Professor Edward Dent, he produced *Dido and Æneas* at a music festival at Münster. At Essen two years later he produced the first German stage performance of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*. The Folkwangsbühne at Essen has been, under Kurt Jooss, the headquarters of the Laban school in Germany, and was, until the revolution, a municipally supported school of drama, dance and music.

But it was only in July, 1932, that Kurt Jooss attained international fame. When, on the second day of the ballet competition organised by the Archives Internationales de la Danse, the curtain rose for the first time on *La Table Verte, danse macabre*, by Kurt Jooss, a rather jaded audience suddenly realised that the impossible had happened and that the competition had given birth to a work of genius. The scenes of enthusiasm which followed its performance and the award of the first prize surpassed any I have seen even in the great days of the Diaghileff ballet. It was not only a tribute to a superb piece of choreography, but a sudden release of profound emotion, a kind of electric storm; for without a written word of explanation this extraordinary ballet had succeeded in expressing in musical and bodily rhythm the most passionate and penetrating satire on contemporary history.

The "gentlemen in black" (*i Signori neri*) who cluster round the green table in the opening scene, in their mildly caricatural masks, black tail-coats, and white gloves, are obviously the delegates of a political conference. This brilliantly satiric scene, with its tempestuous contradictions, bland reconciliations, private confabulations, comic asides and visual white-gloved applause disappearing in a smoke of pistol shots fired simultaneously in the air by each pacific delegate, is ironically the epilogue as well as the prologue to the Dance of Death.

The music, composed simultaneously with the ballet, sustains its emotion and movement at every point. Originally written for an orchestra twice the size of that provided by the Archives Internationales de la Danse, it was rapidly scored for two pianos by the composer, Fritz Cohen, and it is in this form that we hear it at the Savoy, admirably performed by him and Hans Muller Kray. It is in every way worthy of the ballet.

We have no space here to comment on the first part of the programme, which contains some charming and interesting experiments in pure choreography and dance-mime, particularly *The Big City*, danced to Tansman's delightful *Sonatine Transatlantique*. But *The Green Table* is in another category altogether. Before this profoundly moving work of art, discussions of method of technique are dumb. The power and originality of its conception have received a perfect and final embodiment.

If the international delegates now sitting round another green table in London should seek refreshment from their labours, and carry away enlightenment as well, the company will not have danced and the conference will not have sat in vain.

BERYL DE ZOETE

## PUCK AND PAN

THE O.U.D.S. are faithful to foreign producers: after Mr. Komisarjevsky they invited an American, Mr. Brewster Morgan, and this year they have succeeded in persuading Professor Reinhardt himself to direct for them *The Midsummer Night's Dream*. They are proved wiser in their internationalism this year than even they could have imagined possible, for it needed a stranger's eyes to realise the potentialities of Shakespeare's fantasy, played out of doors, at midsummer. The stage is set, not in the cloistered safety of a college garden, where the staid paths and grey buildings protect from the fairies, but in the real woods and fields. Professor Reinhardt has called in nature as his ally and used her as few have done since the Greeks. As they depended on the isolation of hard blue sky, untrammelled air, and burning sun, so he depends on elm and may and aspen, the stage furniture provided at South Park, Headington. The gradually darkening owl-light is streaked by soft lighting, that casts strange orange shadows on the long grass, sustaining the illusion of a dark wood without artificiality of effect, or undue emphasis. The processions, both of mortals and of fairies, come out of the dim fields on to the sloping stage. The tumbling jesters that go before the first coming of Theseus and Hippolyta, the terrifying Dryads that put their enchantments on Snug, Snout and Starveling, and the stately advance of the four Borzois and their attendant ladies in the last act are not exquisite pageantry only: the play is still a dream, but the spectators are become partners, almost actors in it, caught up by Oberon's magic into Palladian Athens and its neighbouring glades. As Alice was but a creature in the Red King's dream, so now the audience becomes implicated in the strange happenings of that night, and the translation of Bottom is a katharsis terrible both to his companions on the stage and to those off it: for one awful moment Puck is become Pan, and the green madness is upon clowns and trees and watchers equally. The spell is potent also whenever Miss Nini Theilade dances, for she has perfection of body, of movement, and of

rhythm, together with a spontaneity and discretion rare at any age, but most rare at seventeen. She has invented all the dances and the choreography is hers also. But Professor Reinhardt never allows his instruments to exceed their usefulness, nor to impinge on the unity that he builds up. The dancers take their places as the clowns or the lovers, and remain in them, soberly, and obediently, nor is he tempted by any success of detail to depart from his whole vision of the play. Puck occasionally is over-teutonised, a very Nandernip, Bottom, though a likeable rascal, is sometimes perilously near broad and even low comedy; yet such lapses matter little.

ANNE FREMANTLE

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### Veronica

Because it promises so much, Mr. C. K. Munro's Shavian farce, now revised and presented at the Embassy Theatre, is a disappointment. Technically it commits the cardinal error of keeping the audience groping too long. True, that a masterly third act gathers up the threads and reveals the pattern of the piece at last. But before then, the interest of the theme has become fatally blunted amid a mass of caricatures and dull, broad jokes. Yet the central idea is excellent. Veronica, who coolly extracts pound notes from the pockets of rich, vain men by telling them, without the batting of an eyelid, that it is nothing but their money she wants, embodies two delicious satirical truths —that sentimental Man will always refuse to believe plain facts while a pair of candid blue eyes invite him to forget them, and that there is, for him, no temptation so deadly as that which proffers itself in ethical guise. Veronica keeps her feckless artist husband by allowing her admirers to think that they may redeem her from a life of shame. Unfortunately, Mr. Munro declines to consider these admirers as anything but ninnies or beasts of the field. The character of the artist-husband is, again, too obvious —the laughs grow cheaper and cheaper as he approximates more and more closely to the amoral feather-pate of a *Punch* caricature in the 'nineties. Miss Madeleine Carroll plays Veronica charmingly, if perhaps a trifle austerely—she does not quite achieve the unconscious provocativeness which the part demands. Also charming, if maddening, is Mr. Harold Scott as her husband. The rest of the cast are a trifle amateurish, except for Mr. Lawrence Anderson, who as the third-act lawyer shoulders all responsibility with an irresistible suavity. The production is half-hearted—a mixture of farce and comedy, with a deplorably slow tempo.

### Cupid and the Don

This adaptation from the French of Jules Romains, now running at the Westminster Theatre, makes a pleasing comedy, but it might have been much better. The translation is smooth and easy, and obviously reproduces the facts of the original; but quite how much of the spirit it gets across is not clear. The quality of the humour always remains in doubt. With a material fact like the Cambridge Don of the adaptation constantly before you some of the ideas get out of focus, and look as if they had been invented on the spur of the moment as occasions arose; and this in spite of Mr. Frank Birch's expressive face, which always acts as a barometer of prevailing conditions. But the central idea, as old as the hills, still has enough humour to stand a lot of buffeting. The theme is the disintegration of professorial habits in face of a love affair and their sudden reintegration when it is over, and there are some excellent subsidiary themes, far too complicated to retail, but full of possibilities. Mr. David Horne, as an engaging burglar, has one of them all to himself and plays with it delightfully. If the adaptation and production had gone all out for satire or farce or anything definitely and consistently, and if Miss Leonora Corbett had not been grossly miscast, this would have been a better entertainment. Even now, it is probably quite the wittiest play in London.

### Sea-piece

*Eight Bells* at the Duchess Theatre is a "gripping drama" of the good old school with all the good old trappings, but it is also, in its way, a good play. There is the right tensity of feeling from the first moment and no unpleasant intensity of sentiment. The situations spring naturally from the subject: life on a windjammer with a bullying captain and a mixed crew at the outbreak of the Great War. The author sticks to realism, and his characters and situations, love scenes and all, come off consistently well and provide good opportunities for a cast that knows how to use them. The play is thoroughly what it pretends to be—a rattling good yarn. No more, but certainly no less.

## THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, June 23rd—
- Matinee performance of Dance and Music by the Ruby Ginner and Irene Mawer Company, Regent's Park; and on June 26th and 28th.
- "La Belle Dame," Tavistock Little Theatre, Tavistock Place, W.C., 8.

SATURDAY, June 24th—
- Royal Air Force Display, Hendon.
- Cricket, England *v.* West Indies, Lord's.
- Oaklands Association Rally, Oaklands International Hostel, Hildenborough, Kent.
- National Conference of the Teaching Profession against War and Economics, Transport House, Smith Square, 2.30.
- Song, Dance and Mime, Hyde Park, 3 and 7.

SUNDAY, June 25th—
- Prof. J. C. Flugel on "The Psychology of Dress," Conway Hall, 11.
- Dr. L. S. Stebbing on "Ethical Relativity," Hampstead Ethical Society, 158A Mill Lane, N.W., 6.15.
- "Happiness," Embassy Theatre.

MONDAY, June 26th—
- Golf. The Ryder Cup, Southport.
- Lawn Tennis Championships, Wimbledon.
- "Le Viol de Lucrèce," Wyndham's Theatre.
- "Mr. Bluebeard," Garrick Theatre.

TUESDAY, June 27th—
- Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur on "The Indian Women's Point of View," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
- Camargo Ballet Society, Gala Performance, Royal Opera, Covent Garden, 9.15; and on June 29th.

THURSDAY, June 29th—
- Flower Show, British Delphinium Society and National Sweet Pea Society, Horticultural Hall.
- "Hamlet." Cranleigh School, Surrey, 7.30. And on June 30th and July 1st.

FRIDAY, June 30th—
- Public Meeting in Aid of Relief Work against Fascism. Speeches by Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Mrs. Despard, Egon Kisch and Ernst Toller. Kingsway Hall, 8.

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# Current Literature

## BOOKS IN GENERAL

*The Empty Quarter*, by H. St. John Philby (Constable. 21s.) is the record of the second crossing, within a year of the first, of the Rub-al-Kali, the great desert of Eastern Arabia, and it will be found doubly interesting by all who read Mr. Bertram Thomas's account, since it furnishes dramatic answers to the questions raised there and adds very greatly indeed to our knowledge of the country. Mr. Thomas, who was always referred to by the Arabs as "the Christian," travelled from South to North with a party of hired Arab guides, and his effort was limited by their knowledge and experience, by his own funds, and by the necessity of keeping on good terms with the men to whom he had trusted his life. Thus he passed near, but was unable to visit, the legendary ruins of Wabar, the city in which King Ad had rioted in luxury before it was destroyed by fire from heaven owing to his neglect of the Prophet Heber. As Mr. Philby, in his turn, approached it, he heard one of his guides singing a ballad which he renders thus:

> From Qariya strikes the sun upon the town;
> Blame not the guide that vainly seeks it now,
> Since the destroying power laid it low,
> Sparing not cotton smock nor silken gown.
>
> Hear then the words of Ad, Kin 'Ad his son:
> Behold my castled town Aubar yclept!
> Full ninety steeds within its walls I kept,
> To hunt the quarry, small and great, upon.

The legend was therefore excitingly alive while the word Wabar or Aubar had struck Mr. Thomas as a possible corruption of ὄφαρ which is Ofar or Ophir in our pronunciation—the city of gold and apes and peacocks. When at last Mr. Philby, a close friend and co-religionist of Ibn Saud, the Wahhabi King, was able to execute the single idea, the single obsession, which he tells us had dominated his life for fifteen years, to cross the Rub-al-Kali, he naturally took pains to visit the fabled city.

> I reached the summit and in that moment fathomed the legend of Wabar. I looked down not upon the ruins of an ancient city but into the mouth of a volcano, whose twin craters, half-filled with drifted sand, lay side by side surrounded by slag and larva outpoured from the bowels of the earth. That, at any rate, was the impression that flashed through my mind in that moment. I knew not whether to laugh or cry, but I was strangely fascinated by a scene that had shattered the dreams of years. So that was Wabar! A volcano in the desert!

The craters were not indeed volcanic but circles of glass slag fused from the desert sand by the intense heat of a huge meteoritic fall. Mr. Philby was able to find a lump of meteoritic iron, and that abode of omniscience, the British Museum, was able to match it with another specimen of exactly the same composition which had been obtained in the year 1861 on the Persian Gulf, and which must have come from Wabar also.

* * *

But this is by no means the only or even the greatest of Mr. Philby's discoveries which extend from dozens of new species of the desert fauna, to the charting of the beds of several great rivers which in former ages flowed through a fertile land before desiccation set in.

> Suddenly I observed a white object on the ground and, before I could take in its significance, we were marching on masses of them. "Look!" I said to Salim, "shells of the sea! I must dismount. . . ." The place was simply littered with shells, and among the shells we collected a good assortment of the most delightful flint implements of antiquity. . . .

Actually the shells were all of fresh-water species. Setting out on the eve of the great fast of Ramadhan with a party of nineteen men, Shaikh 'Abdullah, alias Mr. Philby, kept the fast, not drinking or eating between sunrise and sunset, and performing the three daily prayers enjoined on travellers by his religion. The greater part of the time he eschewed water entirely, preferring tea until his supply of that was exhausted. The weather was often bitterly cold, and on the first morning he found the sands burning his bare feet as with hot needles. The temperature was 27° Fahrenheit! There are many moving incidents of the march diversifying the daily life of the travellers and throwing light upon the country and the people. Thus one night one of the men, missing his riding camel in the dark, picked up a lantern and went off to bring her back, tracking her by her footprints among the hundreds of other camel footprints criss-crossing the sand, and one night all the camp lay awake with their rifles in their hands since one man of them had *smelled* brigands in the distance. No one doubted him, and events proved that he was right. The following sentence gives me a greater sense of the vastness of desert, of the unbroken wilderness of space, than any direct description could do.

> The only sign of life on the whole of this march had been a single Bifasciated Lark, whose piping announced its presence long before I could detect it tripping along the ground out of the way. In all these bare districts the desert birds seldom seem to take to their wings, generally preferring to run along the ground, which provides them with almost perfect protection from birds of prey. A flying bird is often betrayed by its dark shadow on the ground.

Yet through this almost featureless country of changing dunes and gravel plains, his guides led on with an unerring sense of distance and direction from one of the wells, made by the ancients, to another. Their uncanny sense never failed except on night marches under clouded skies, and then they were loth to be corrected by the compass.

* * *

The characters of the Arabs do not emerge clearly until the latter part of the book, when after a first failure Mr. Philby forced his companions to a second and successful attempt to cross the waterless desert from East to West—375 miles between water and water. It is not only that Mr. Philby is not naturally a good writer, but that being accepted by the Arabs, and accepting them, their characters sink into the background. Though he felt squeamish about sharing all their habits, in particular about eating the intestines of hares, he was safe with them and they become of less consequence than in the tale of the *Nasrany* who must watch his *rafik* closely lest he find that he is betrayed, or that his guides have saddled their camels whilst he was sleeping and have departed, leaving him to perish. Something indeed must be said of the style of Mr. Philby's writing, which is often disappointing. Arabia has inspired two of the most remarkable books which have appeared in the last fifty years, Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* and Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Each is a stylistic masterpiece, and though absolutely dissimilar each book not only reflects the extraordinary character of its author but the very desert itself. The chief thing Doughty and Lawrence have in common is a very rich vocabulary full of rare and ancient words, which are full of associations of simpler ages and therefore particularly fitting for a primitive mode of life. Mr. Philby half-heartedly attempts a similar diction which often breaks down absurdly:

> 'Ibn Jilawi sent forth his messengers East and West and South and North, to summon the necessary array, while his son, Sa'ud, took over all responsibility for the commissariat arrangements.

But fortunately as his story proceeds he begins to write better; he loses self-consciousness and relives the great moments of his journey and slowly finds eloquence:

> Great black clouds of sand raced before the gale along the summits around us like squadrons of Valkyries, while from the higher dune-tops streamed, as it were, dark pennants in the wind, and the desert floor was swept as by driving snow, sheet after sheet of white sand, like successive waves of a cavalry charge.

And after the first attempt to cross the waterless desert, when the Arabs insist on turning back, and Mr. Philby feels that they have betrayed him, he is able to write well about them. And in the end he succeeds in giving us a picture of a strangely complex and individual character—a man obsessed and jealous of his obsession, courageous, aloof and uncommunicative: the English Shaikh 'Abdullah who with the help of the Wahhabi King has achieved his ends.

DAVID GARNETT

## A REBEL'S CAREER

**Unfinished Adventure.** By EVELYN SHARP. *John Lane.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The multitude who have reason to be thankful that Evelyn Sharp lived through her still *Unfinished Adventure* must be as numerous as it is polyglot. It begins with English folk, now nearing middle age, who count her fairy-tales among the chief delights of their childhood. It has not ended, one is sure, with the Russian children whose lives she helped to save during the Volga famine. In the crowd there are English women who looked to her for leadership during the struggle for the vote. Poles and Germans whom she helped in the months of misery that followed the silence of the cannon in 1919 are there to increase the babel. Only a fraction of this crowd will be able to read this delightful book in which she has told the story of her life, but, even after a rigid selection on the score of language, it will be both large and enthusiastic.

An odd touch of Victorian paradox gives a spice to these recollections; Evelyn Sharp begins by describing herself as a coward. Nature enjoyed the joke, for Nature made her slight and quiet and unassuming, so that it is rather easier to place her among her Quaker fellow-workers than among her militant suffragist comrades. She tells us that she shrinks from travel and is always sea-sick. But straightway this coward rushes into a rebel's career, walks undismayed through several prisons, fights a lone battle with the Treasury, and strides from Rhine to Volga in the wake of war and revolution, while the timid traveller contrives to visit, at the least comfortable moment, a quarter of the globe.

The early years are distant enough to seem at once amusing and romantic, and, as always in books of reminiscence, they make not the least entrancing reading. The little girl grew up in an immense Victorian family. We read of adventures in Paris, when a concierge armed with a revolver must needs escort the young ladies in their walks, and of the Irish May Day procession that was mistaken for a revolution. Out of this prim world we emerge into the group of writers and artists that gathered round the Yellow Book. We recall with a strained effort of memory the shrinking and indignation of this age, which *Punch* summed up in the epigram that "uncleanliness is next to Bodleyness," One by one these pioneers, more gracious or whimsical than dynamic in their aesthetic revolt against Victorianism, move through these pages—Aubrey Beardsley, Kenneth Grahame, Oscar Wilde (a dim figure), but chiefly Henry Harland.

Neither here nor elsewhere does the author pause to give us much of her reflections or criticisms—we might have welcomed rather more of them—but in an always vivacious stream of anecdotes and experiences she introduces us to her friends. One used to suppose that only egoists wrote autobiography. If this book has a defect it is the absence of egoism. Our curiosity about this unusual personality, by turns Bohemian, Quaker and rebel, is never fully satisfied when we have read her narratives of her unusual doings. By compensation we hurry through a rich portrait gallery of her friends. It is rather better filled, one notes, in the earlier years than in later life. As befits that time of life, they are all witty, brilliant and original persons. In the later chapters they have a way of being solid and good.

The tone does not consciously change. Always it suggests an attitude of humorous surprise at the doings of the contemporary world, which rarely if ever fails in toleration. The rippling stream of amused comment and whimsical anecdote flows on unbroken, even after the war. But the world grows in spite of it grimmer and graver. It seems a deliciously irresponsible playground in the years of the aesthetes and the Yellow Book. It begins to take itself seriously with the struggle for the vote. In the final chapters that move down Rhine and Volga the elegance has vanished: votes seem an eccentric concern: one feels dimly that a civilisation is staggering to its decline. It is not that the author deliberately suggests any reflections of this kind. Her cheerful, amused tolerance never deserts her. She is alive to the humours even of the French occupation of the Rhineland. One knows that she would describe the Last Judgment as she describes her experiences in prison, without a trace of rancour against the Bench and with an alert eye for the foibles of the angelic warders. But this whimsical calm, as the even voice runs on, has none the less its effects of contrast: a prison door to this accompaniment makes a startlingly unmannerly noise. The book will amuse and interest the generation that lived through these things, and to a later age it will descend as a unique record of gallant action and cool observation.

H. N. B.

## A MAGNIFICENT NOSE

**Facing the Music:** Reflections of a Music Critic. By W. J. TURNER. *Bell.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

In a characteristic essay contained in the present volume, entitled *The Expert and the Amateur*, Mr. W. J. Turner vigorously attacks the former and defends the latter, apropos some unfortunate amateur writer on music who had been found guilty by a professional critic of ascribing to Mozart some well-known work by some other composer. "I will assert in the biggest bow-bow style I can command," writes Mr. Turner, "that the expert is the greatest of all frauds in every field. . . I am not impressed by the mere knowledge of Mozart's compositions, and an ability to place the musical article by memory in the right place. . . .That is the nature of the expert—and I declare that aesthetically or artistically the whole of such expertise, of such expert knowledge, is not worth a straw. . . . I would go farther and assert that a consciousness of weakness in sensibility, in the power of direct immediate assent or dissent, in many persons drives them to try and to bolster up this weakness by acquiring what they call 'knowledge,' in the hope that this 'knowledge,' when acquired, will enable them to make the judgments which they cannot make directly. . . . It is not the knowledge of the expert, it is the experience of the human being that makes works of art intelligible."

This seems to me to be the essence of Mr. Turner's critical creed, as well as a kind of personal apologia. Not that one could for a moment identify him with the unfortunate amateur he is defending; Mr. Turner seldom shows himself to be lacking in the technical knowledge which he despises. In the present volume I have been able to discover only two positive errors: one where he refers to the "magnificent C major Symphony No. 7" in Haydn's London Symphonies; the other where he speaks of Vecchi's *Amfiparnasso* as an opera "in which drama and music were sacrificed to polyphonic virtuosity." The seventh of Haydn's London Symphonies is in D minor; the only one of the set in C major is No. 1. This, of course, may only be a misprint; at the worst it is only the kind of mistake that even experts make now and then. The other is a more serious error, for it shows that Mr. Turner is not writing from personal knowledge of the work in question, which is not an opera, in the first place, but a cantata, as is shown clearly by a passage in the preface, in which the composer says:

> —questo di cui parlo
> Spettacolo si mira con la mente
> Dov' entra per l'orecchie, e non per gl' occhi.

Furthermore, drama is not sacrificed to polyphony in it. The work is full of dramatic vitality, not least in the most polyphonic moments such as the splendid comic chorus of Jews in the third part. Mr. Turner here, in fact, is evidently writing from "knowledge" acquired from an unreliable expert, which is what he himself so strongly condemns.

Still, these are minor points. Mr. Turner is as well equipped in mere "knowledge" as most professional critics, and better than many I could name if I were not such a perfect gentleman. He is, however, primarily a writer who is interested in music, not a musician who happens to be able to write, as most of his colleagues are. He is absolutely right, none the less, in championing the cause of uninstructed aesthetic sensibility against that of mere erudition and expert knowledge. In the *Journal* of the brothers Goncourt the eminent French literary critic, Taine, is compared with a dog which belonged to an acquaintance of theirs. "Il quêtait, il arrêtait, il faisait tout le manège d'un chien de chasse d'une manière merveilleuse; seulement il n'avait pas de nez." The simile always makes me think of an equally eminent English music critic of the present time who knows everything that there is to be known about music, but is completely at sea whenever a purely aesthetic issue is involved. He has no nose, in fact, like the Goncourt dog. Mr. Turner, on the other hand, sometimes behaves in a most odd and disconcerting fashion; he starts many hares and perpetually dashes off on the wrong scent, but the hares are there and the scent exists. In a word, he has a nose. One might almost say that he *is* a nose—naso et praeterea nihil—a disembodied nose like that in the story of Gogol, dressed in a gold-laced uniform, chamois-leather breeches, plumed hat, and big stand-up collar. A magnificent disembodied nose must inevitably give an impression of supreme impertinence, and when this musical nose, a few years ago, announced quite quietly that Bach was a colossal bore, the whole professional musical world protested against the impertinence. The nose was perfectly right, however; Bach is a colossal bore, as often as not. He happens also to have been one

of the greatest artists of all time, but I am quite sure that the nose was perfectly well aware of this. He was only concerned for the time being in stating a valuable half-truth, in protest against the prevailing cult of uncritical and indiscriminate adulation, which, ultimately, does far more harm to a great composer than any so-called impertinence. Personally, I do not find Mr. Turner's questioning of accepted values impertinent, but quite literally the very opposite—extremely pertinent. And however emphatically one may be compelled to disagree with him on occasion, there is always an aesthetic sensibility behind his judgments that one can only respect.

Actually in the present volume of essays there is much less than usual to which one could take exception, even with the best will in the world. I find Mr. Turner particularly admirable in his writing on Mozart who, he confesses, is his "favourite among all composers." I cannot myself understand how one comes to have a favourite composer, but Mr. Turner's expressed preference does not, as one might expect, lead him to do less than justice to Mozart's rivals, such as Haydn, for example, about whom he writes with real understanding and sympathy. Alike in his appreciations of Verdi and Berlioz, and in his denigrations of Wagner and Franck, he seems to me to be consistently right. On the other hand he is surely at fault when he says that Sibelius's power of construction is "of a strictly limited kind." I should have thought that even if one disliked Sibelius—which Mr. Turner certainly does not—one would at least have to admit the breadth and variety of his constructive powers. Finally, I cannot follow him in his wildly enthusiastic cult for Schnabel—an admirable artist, admittedly, but not the species of demi-god that Mr. Turner represents him to be.

The chief fault of the book, however, is the result of its very nature, consisting as it does for the most part of short articles, the majority of which are reprinted from these columns. Some of the papers are too scrappy and topical for republication in book form; others, one feels, contain excellent ideas and interesting lines of thought which should have been developed at greater length.

CECIL GRAY

## NEW NOVELS

**The New Bridge.** By MEYER LEVIN. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.
**Captain Bottell.** By JAMES HANLEY. *Boriswood.* 8s. 6d.
**Ultramarine.** By MALCOLM LOWRY. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.
**Covering Two Years.** By I. V. MORRIS. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.
**As the Earth Turns.** By GLADYS CARROLL. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.
**Creatures of An Hour.** By DOREEN WALLACE. *Benn.* 7s. 6d.
**The Holiday.** By RICHMAL CROMPTON. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.
**Nothing Lasts.** By JOANNA FEVEREL. *Grayson.* 7s. 6d.
**Rubber.** By MADELON H. LULOFS. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.

If only the hard-headed were not so soft-hearted, if only the news story camera man could resist self-improvement under the guise of a little tinkering in the evenings with colour photography—those sugared almond pinks, those cachou mauves! But then stark realists are all the same. They give you two hundred pages of their best, and then slip in 50 pages of their worst because some reviewer has warned them not to forget "humanity." Humanity, yes; but why gold? Mr. Levin's *The New Bridge* is an embarrassing example. It is the story of the revolt in a New York tenement, when police and bailiffs come to evict an out-of-work tenant, and is first class black and white reporting which has the excellence of Elmer Rice's *Street Scene*. It is dramatic, laconic, true to the eye and ear and, stripped of its opening and concluding chapters, it is a sound piece of work. But those concluding chapters! That awful meeting between Schwartz, the landlord, and his tenant on the bridge at midnight with suicidal intent! It is one of the tragedies of realism that so many of its cultivators have hearts of gold. One cannot forget that Zola wrote *Le Rêve*. Or perhaps the trouble is racial and in Mr. Levin we have another example of that fatal softness which melts the superb mechanism of so much Jewish talent.

A more serious disaster has occurred to Mr. Hanley, whose realism is starker; and those who have warned him against the sordid and the brutal in the hope that he would turn into an unimpeachable bourgeois writer must bear some of the blame. For in a large part of this ambitious novel Mr. Hanley is attempting too big a pie, with the result that it is half-baked. Once content to describe the stokehold, he now lectures us on it, through the mouth of Mulcare, one of the firemen, a character whose strange possibilities are neglected for his commonplace opinions. The result is sentimentality and ineptitude; and as Mr. Hanley's people are very limited in the variety of their reactions, the whole atmosphere of suspense in which he has attempted to launch Captain Bottell, his ship, his one woman passenger and his sinister fireman, at Liverpool for the Persian Gulf, becomes one of jerky irritation. On the other hand the last third of the book, when the Captain has fallen in love with the woman and goes mad because of his sufferings, and the weather pounds at the worn-out ship until she sinks, Mr. Hanley's unspoiled native power returns to him. Narrative excitement cleanses his imagination of didactic excess and he has a fine simple mastery of his macabre intentions. One looks back upon the bad stretches incredulously and concludes that the sooner he digests and assimilates his political education and sticks to the people he really knows, the better for the art he knows well how to practise.

*Ultramarine* is about the fo'c'sle also, but from an opposite point of view to Mr. Hanley's. Here we have a young man down from Cambridge travelling rough for the experience, hated by the crew because he is a "toff," pitifully anxious to be one of them and never succeeding. The young man is not, however, merely the victim of a new snobbery. He is in the unhappy state of having vowed to remain chaste for his young woman at home—an attitude which the crew take as a further example of the toff's "side." The curse upon the book is a strained self-consciousness, and self-conscious writers are metallic, monotonous and unrevealing. When he is not swinging the pendulum back into a number of unimportant memories of his schooldays, forcing a significance upon them which never justifies itself either in the story or as an illumination of temperament, he is reporting the fo'c'sle Hemingway dialogue. He is all nerves. The sailors were undoubtedly right about his hero's needs. Yet *Ultramarine* has a quality. The voyage is an experience which the author had to get off his chest, and he succeeds in making the need seem urgent. There is a good scene with a drunken German in a Chinese port; upon this Mr. Lowry is to be complimented. When he has stopped straining eyes, ears and nerves and ceases to let the world hammer him so that he sees nothing but stars and fragments, he may do something good. His broken dialogue *in vacuo* bored me, but his direct and unevasive descriptions did not.

*Covering Two Years* is the most absorbing of the novels in this list, though it does not offer the brighter baits of style, dialogue, and vivid impression. Its style is, in fact, commonplace, but without vulgarity, and the author slurs over what seem to me to be two important dramatic crises. The book is redeemed by the dramatic strength of its construction and the excellence of its pattern. What might have been mere case history becomes a moving and powerful story. Mr. Morris is a novelist of limited sensibility, but of keen orderly perceptiveness, and the rational hardness of his manner sets off all the better the horror and pity of the "heroine's" line of fate. Judith Mahon is thirty-three, a cultivated spinster living in her uncle's household in Boston. The household is a living tomb. She has chosen it for that reason; owing to a sense of guilt in the suicide of a friend, she feels she has no right to live except in sub-human inferiority. She has become a complete neurotic, and the story reveals little by little not only the origin, the defences, the process of the neurosis, but the attempt of a man whose curiosity and love are aroused to cure her. All the shames and transferences of morbid psychology are turned to most effective dramatic use; one is drawn into the ever-strengthening current of inevitability, and the workmanship of this dramatised analysis takes "the case" almost completely out of the notebook. Except, as I have said, at two points. The first is the point at which Judith becomes the lawyer's mistress. This is glossed over in two or three lines. At the second point the lapse into notebook is more serious. It is when Judith, returning with the neurotic's horrible appetite to her malady, repeats her earlier tragedy, and becomes the mistress of a Roumanian painter and returns to the living tomb. Mr. Morris has not skimped the facts. He *tells* us, indeed, that these are crises, but he does not *show* them to us as crises. I should have liked to say this book was in the first rank, because with Mr. Morris's craftsmanship it ought to have been.

*As The Earth Turns* is also an American novel, being an account of one critical year in the life of New England farmers when the family suffers upheaval, and has to face at the end the company of immigrant neighbours. A plodding, intelligent, agricultural book, without spring or accent to it, and bedded out with dutifully observed characters.

Abstracts from

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Next Sunday

Miss Doreen Wallace responds with agriculture in Suffolk, with similarly pleasing pictures of the countryside, and with more various but more dubious adventures in characterisation. Her theme is old father, young stepmother and father's son; the accident with which she attempts to solve her difficulties at the end is artificial. Miss Wallace is still sympathetic, but *Creatures of an Hour* is not as limpid as her other books.

*The Holiday* is a very capable account of what happened to a clergyman and his family of young children when they went to the country some thirty years ago for a holiday. The children's characters are skilfully differentiated, but finding the holiday somewhat heavy on her hands Miss Crompton has overdone the number of grotesque characters who bring nothing to the theme. A clever and estimable novel.

*Nothing Lasts* is about the young, promiscuity and a boarding house. "What music is more enchanting than the voices of young people," said Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, "when you can't hear what they say?" Alas, in this book one is obliged to listen. A description of a gambler waking up after a thick night is well done; the rest is solicitous, observant in an obvious way, and jejune.

To return to our realists, *Rubber* describes the intrigues, jealousies, hardships and boredom of life in a rubber plantation in the Dutch East Indies, and is a worthy book of little inspiration or imaginative power.

V. S. PRITCHETT

## A HERO OF OUR TIMES

**Half-a-Life.** By JAMES STRACHEY BARNES. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 10s. 6d.

The first half of Mr. James Strachey Barnes's life leaves us wondering a little uneasily whether the second half can possibly continue the triumphant curve here drawn with so sure a hand. He lost his mother in early childhood, it is true, and that, he assures us, is "the most tragic thing that any child can suffer . . ." But "Providence spoilt me in the same breath that He chastised me." What did He not give Mr. Barnes?

To begin with, grandparents, Sir John and Lady Strachey provided him with an earthly paradise near Florence in which a great part of his childhood was spent. To be sure "Rome is the Queen of cities . . . No doubt about that . . But Florence is an intellectual, a purist of the pure. As a breeding ground for young children she is unsurpassed. She refines and stimulates the mind and the aesthetic senses." He was taught good Italian and good French, music, Shakespeare and Botticelli. He met "all the local intellectuals" Monsignor Cappelli, Walburga Lady Paget, Mrs. Ross, Labouchere, Prince Doria and Pasquele Villari. He listened to D'Annunzio who "held us spellbound" with his "golden voice," and "white mask of a face, white as ivory with full red lips," At ten years old he could "distinguish the styles of Donatello and Verrocchio, Giotto and Fra Angelico, Raphael and Michael Angelo, Michelozzi and Bramante." He talked glibly of Caesar and of Pericles, and of all the great men down to Gladstone and Chamberlain. Small wonder that when his rather cold and unsympathetic father and stepmother returned from India and he and his sister went to their English home "I felt very much like an orphan must feel. I bitterly missed my Italian home, longed for another such one, but found it not. But I was proud; I said little." Such want of sympathy seems only to have been what was necessary to induce Mr. Barnes to "hack his own way through life." And so he tells us how he did this, first at a preparatory school and then at Eton. In consequence of his early life in Italy he found much to dislike and disapprove in the Public School System and Education; yet he tells us that all his Eton friends were "intellectually distinguished, caring, as I did, for beautiful things and thirsting for knowledge . . . I made friends slowly, and I chose them, as I choose them now, with a great catholicity of taste, one here, one there." One real misfortune befell him during his school life. "My dear grandmother had received a stroke, so that the one person—my substitute for a mother—who might have helped me was removed." She died after a long illness and her death was followed not long after, by that of his grandfather. Sir John Strachey did not, according to his grandson, die a Catholic: but if we are to believe the account here given, it was only owing to the accidental presence of a Protestant Aunt Jenny and absence of Catholic Aunt Molly that this can be said.

Mr. Barnes left Eton apparently, but rather vaguely, in disgrace. He was evidently a naughty boy. He shammed illness by the trick of holding in his mouth very hot water and so producing a sham temperature; he ran away to London to go to the opera; he founded literary societies which met at midnight. Most of his wickednesses were undiscovered, but his tutor's patience for some reason was at an end—he refused to keep him longer. His father wished him to go to Sandhurst and to India. He was determined to do nothing of the sort. "There are two things, I urged, in which I am passionately interested, for which I believe I have talents quite above the ordinary: politics and writing." It was no use. The long argument ended by his agreeing to go to Sandhurst, but only after a time abroad in which to rub up his languages. And so he went to "Glorious Touraine," learnt French again, travelled with the gypsies, met Hugh Walpole and wrote poetry. Sandhurst was dreary by comparison; but he succeeded, on leaving it, in abandoning any idea of India; instead he was destined for the Diplomatic Service, and meanwhile he spent a few years "travelling, reading observing, thinking. Incidentally, I began to make friends in Society with a big 'S' and to meet people whose stars shine brightly in the firmament of popular interest." He met Mr. Eddie Marsh—"as a collector he is insatiable. He collects modern pictures to help struggling artists as well as to leave to the nation. He collects Georgian poetry. He collects handsome young men. He collected Rupert Brooke. He collected me. . . ." And D. H. Lawrence: "We took very easily to each other. His great nervous vitality—and, I might say, mine—mutually attracted each other . . ." and when at last he reached Cambridge he "made friends with Keynes, Russell, Goldie Dickinson and Dent." Mr. Keynes, indeed, he admits to be "something of an enigma." But "on close acquaintance one discovers that behind the scales of the serpent there beats a heart capable of registering the most delicate sentiments, kind and compassionate. And when, to the horror of Bloomsbury, for in Bloomsbury the social code is that marriage is scarcely respectable and that the difference between a man and a woman can be eliminated by a contemplation of persons' backs—he actually married that delicious Lopokova—vital, palpitating, clear-sexed—he proved himself before the world at last a man for a' that."

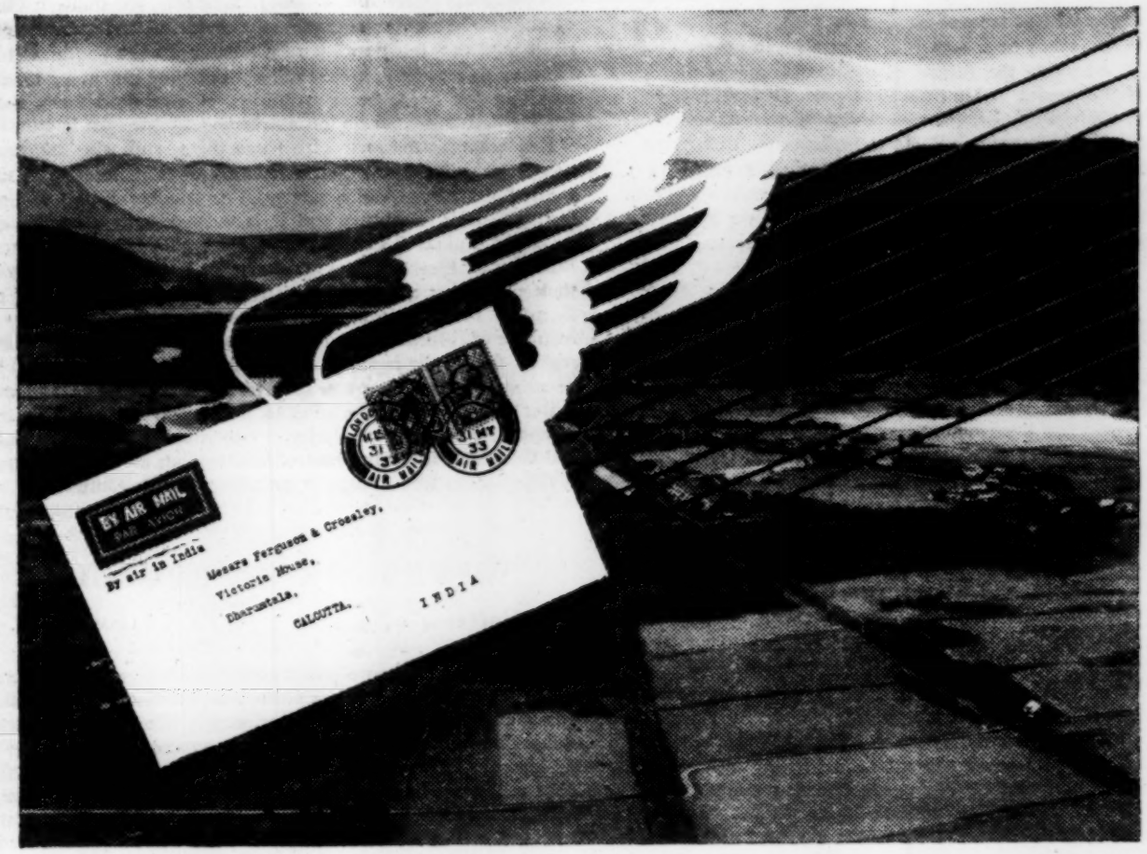
To Mr. Barnes, however, the most important event at Cambridge was his spiritual crisis. After a time of doubt and Positivism and Neitzscheanism and general nightmare he ". . . blazed through the dark wood" where "Dante also lost himself." He was "conscious only of hard, remorseless, scrupulously honest thinking," which finally led to "that wide trench over which no man may leap without the Grace of God. . . . The rest of the tale is beyond human comprehension." So he became a Catholic, and the spiritual crisis was presumably ended for ever.

Cambridge came to an end and he went home again in disgrace—disgrace so deep that his father "literally hoofed me out of the house." He was to be allowed £100 a year. But this was in June, 1914.

After a few short weeks of the London Season war was declared and "action became imperative for us all. My first instinct was to volunteer." But owing to a misconception as to the nature and duration of the war he decided to wait. He went to Italy. He wrote articles by the yard, he made money by journalism, then back to England again where he met old Etonian friends who were officers in the Blues. So he joined them and was reconciled to his father.

Life in the Blues was very pleasant, especially as all the officers, without exception, were men of the world. Dining one night in Bloomsbury he met Henry James, who asked him to lunch, and for once in his life had to spend a five hours' tête-a-tête listening. He made friends with Augustus John and his family of whom he writes: "True to his own manly self, he has found his feminine ideal in the true woman like his Dorelia. With his long line of splendid sons and captivating daughters (three of them are Dorelias, the rest his former wife's) is a family which recalls the golden age of innocence."

Later he joined the Flying Corps and took part in the Battle of the Somme. "I had many a narrow escape. On one occasion a shell went straight through my plane. I measured it afterwards and it was a 4.7; but, luckily, it touched nothing vital." Adventures of this kind, however, do not prevent Mr. Barnes from looking back to the Battle of the Somme as one of the happiest times of his life, and he seems to write with regret of the quiet which eventually took the place of constant danger and of the sciatica which prevented him from rejoining the Corps and so made him miss his Military Cross. He fought in the third Battle of Ypres, was sent

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home wounded and then succeeded in getting to the Italian Front where he wished most to be.

There is not space to follow Mr. Barnes's adventures in Italy or speculations as to the future of the world and of European policy, and the stories of his difficulties with D'Annunzio and of his delightfully chatty afternoon *en déshabille* with the Prince of Wales can only be mentioned. It is unfortunate that small inaccuracies should induce a generally sceptical attitude in the reader, but so it is; and when we read of his friends: Mr. Mark Girtler, Mr. Satchy Sitwell and Mr. T. S. Elliot we cannot thrill as we would at the story of the creepy gentleman without a shadow.

E. V.

## UNBENDING TO THE CHILD

**The Modern World: A Junior Survey.** By H. C. KNAPP-FISHER. *Gollancz.* 5s.

If a man who had lived his whole life in some City of Dreadful Night, who had never seen corn growing nor heard a bird sing, were to be introduced for the first time to the countryside, a bad way of effecting the introduction would be by taking him high in an airplane and showing him the whole west of England. Better to take him to a single farm and let him explore it as thoroughly as his time and interest permit. Later, urge him to learn the entire county by traversing it on foot. Finally, when his imagination has worked creatively on countless details, take him into the air, and his bird's-eye survey will be amusing and perhaps even useful.

American universities have long been cursed with what are called "survey courses," in which European history since 1500, or English literature from *Beowulf* to Masefield, are "covered" in a single term. These courses are at last falling into discredit, for it has been learned that they result in a new and abominable form of ignorance, in which nothing is known but a patter of other men's generalisations on questions no one of which the student has the knowledge to define. "Survey courses" might be a mental stimulus to post-graduate students who had worked for years on the field surveyed; but they are bad for undergraduates and worse for children at school. Similarly, the modern Outlines of knowledge may be educative for their authors, and amusing for adult readers; but they have little value for the youthful student. He may find them restful reading; but they can never teach him anything but confusing generalities, or else dead facts, until he has learned many things intimately and by his own labour.

Readers who disagree with these dicta, and who are ready to accept a Junior Survey as a useful aid to education, should be warned that, even for a survey, *The Modern World* is unsatisfactory. It is confused, and it is written with a condescension no child should be asked to endure. "Yes!—there goes the Minister of Health! You can see his head is whirling with all the facts he has to worry him. And there is the President of the Board of Trade, thinking of factories and mines. There goes the Minister of Education with all the troubles of all the schoolmasters and all the pupils jostling in his mind." The modern child may be counted on to reject this description of the politician at work.

But the worst failing of *The Modern World*, if its aims be accepted, is its lack of clarity. Too much has been attempted, and the result is a confusion which, though a realistic suggestion of the modern world, defeats the purpose of an Outline.

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## WAVES OR CORPUSCLES

**The Universe of Light.** By SIR WILLIAM BRAGG. *Bell* 12s. 6d.

If, in one of our more reflective moods, we essay to understand what goes on in the universe around us, we find that we make use almost entirely of our visual experiences. We picture to ourselves the reality underlying the changing appearances. We do not, for instance, try to compose a Score of the World as we should if we relied chiefly on the sense of hearing, nor do we attempt to draw up a Menu of the Cosmos as we should if we thought that taste was a fundamental sense; and the world of smell we leave to dogs and the lower orders of creation. Of all our five senses, it is on sight that we rely the most.

And so it comes about that the properties of light and the peculiarities of human vision have received the attention of nearly all the great natural philosophers. Little progress was made, however, until Sir Isaac Newton in his early years at Cambridge, with a prism bought at a fair, succeeded in showing that white light could be split up into a series of colours and that these colours could be recombined to produce white light again. With these and many other experiments Newton laid the foundations of physical optics. But his conviction that light consisted of a stream of corpuscles was vigorously contested by Christian Huygens of Leyden, who advanced the view that light consists of waves in some kind of medium. Newton's great authority in other departments of physics and mathematics prevented the adoption of the wave theory, and it was not until the work of two other very remarkable men, Thomas Young and Augustin Jean Fresnel, became known that Huygen's theory came into that universal esteem which it has retained right up to the most recent years. Thomas Young, besides maintaining a medical practice in Welbeck Street and deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics, found time to examine the colours of soap films and to demonstrate that two beams of light may produce darkness, thus establishing the phenomenon called Interference—a phenomenon very difficult to explain on the corpuscular hypothesis. At the same time Fresnel, who had lost his post as civil engineer in the French Government for joining the small army that opposed Napoleon's return from Elba, spent the Hundred Days under the surveillance of the police, and used this enforced idleness as an opportunity to speculate upon the theory of diffraction and to construct his now famous biprism.

As a result of the genius of these men, and others who followed them, we can now explain the hues of the rainbow, the myriad colours of the butterfly's wing, the blush of the rose, and the splendours of the setting sun. It was on these and many other fascinating topics that Sir William Bragg discoursed in his Christmas Lectures at the Royal Institution in 1931, and now he presents them for us in his latest book, amplified and illustrated with all the charm and simplicity of exposition which characterised his earlier books and broadcast addresses. He has woven his story around the old rivalry between the corpuscular and the wave theory, and since within the last few years it has been discovered that the wave theory is not the last word, and light sometimes behaves as if it were composed of corpuscles, we can

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see why the author says "There has never been so exciting a period in the history of science as this." And perhaps the greatest compliment we can pay Sir William Bragg is to say that his book enables the general reader to experience some of this excitement and to feel the fascination that always accompanies the unravelling of the mysteries and beauties of nature.

But even when we have mastered the behaviour of radiation and its interaction with matter, we have still the peculiar properties of the human eye to contend with, and perhaps one of the most interesting cases is that of the French *Tricouleur*. Originally the red, white and blue portions were meant to be of the same width. But when the flag was made, it appeared to the eye that the blue part was larger than the red. A Commission of Inquiry was set up, and after careful experiment recommended that the widths of the red, white and blue should be in the proportion 37, 33 and 30. When the flag is composed in this manner the three portions appear of equal width.

For the colour reproductions Sir William Bragg has had the able collaboration of Dr. Thorne Baker, well known for his work on colour-cinematography, and for illustrations where photography is not suitable there are several clever sketches and also an attractive cover by his daughter, Mrs. Caroe. Altogether a delightful and absorbing book—and should there be any who hold with Keats that to explain a rainbow is to rob it of its pristine beauty, let them read through these pages and see if they do not alter their opinion. We believe that they will.

G. B. BROWN

## THE AMERICAN CREED

**Philosophy and Civilisation.** By JOHN DEWEY. *Putnam.* 16*s*.

Professor Dewey is regarded as America's outstanding philosopher, just as Pragmatism, of which he is the exponent, is America's outstanding philosophy. Outstanding and characteristic, for it expresses in an eminent degree the American passion for results by insisting that the truth of a proposition, like the goodness of a person, is ultimately assessable in terms of the consequences of believing the proposition to be true and the person to be good. Nothing for the pragmatist *is* for its own sake; its *raison d'être*, its very being, consists in its effects on men's minds. Thus, man is the measure of all things, and the human mind, the inevitably progressing human mind, is at once the key to truth, the architect of reality and the sole standard of value. These beliefs, it is obvious, fit the American mind like a glove, or they did prior to 1929, for the American mind may now demand a different set of beliefs about itself: different and more chastening.

It is Dewey's greatness that he transcends the littleness of his pragmatist creed. Although his present book is not, like *The Quest for Certainty* or *The Nature of Experience*, a sustained contribution to philosophy—it consists, in fact, of a series of more or less uncorrelated essays on a variety of subjects from "Logical Method and Law" to the problem of "Body and Mind"—it deserves attention and wins respect as the product of a cultivated mind of wide learning and generous sympathies. Although Dewey claims that his philosophy, which he calls Instrumentalism, is in the direct line of descent from the pragmatist movement, which began in America with C. S. Peirce, most of the distinctively pragmatist tenets have been so broadened, most of its assertions so mellowed, that they have ceased to be distinctive. That philosophy is a part of human culture; that it is at once the prop and mirror of a civilisation, partly forming and partly reflecting the ideas it itself has formed; that its function is to interpret to the mind of man the changing world in which he lives; that it must not, except at its peril, degenerate into the abstract and the technical—these views, which Professor Dewey urges with much force and some novelty, are surely not themselves very novel. Pragmatism was once the *enfant terrible* of philosophy; under the care of Professor Dewey the infant has grown up, and now takes its place, a mild and respectable citizen, in the society of its peers.

C. E. M. JOAD

## PROFESSOR HOUSMAN ON POETRY

**The Name and Nature of Poetry.** By A. E. HOUSMAN. *Cambridge University Press.* 2*s*.

Professor Housman's lecture on poetry was widely reported in the press when it was delivered at Cambridge in May. It had the news value of a sudden declaration by Mr. Montagu Norman; in addition it was remarkably lively, personal, and quotable. Public utterances are not usually valuable to-day, but this lecture, part criticism and part confession, makes an admirable addition to the two volumes of poetry (why does not Professor Housman relent and publish the third?), and should be read by everyone who still reads poetry.

For Housman is probably the last considerable poet who has appealed to a large audience as well as a small one *for the same reasons*. Yeats, for example, is prized by a minority for quite different achievements from the anthology pieces. But there is only one side to the poems of *The Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems*, and whether one likes it or not, it is unmistakable. So far as criticism of Housman goes, there has been agreement on most points, except that some critics stress the element of false pastoralism, while others, going all out, put him with, and above, Heine and Catullus.

*The Name and Nature of Poetry* is statement rather than definition, and to that extent may disappoint. The definition, implicit in its argument though not quoted, is Milton's "simple, sensuous and passionate"; and as this is true of a mass of English poetry, good and bad, many readers will take it for granted, as Professor Housman does. What, then, does he add to our traditional conception of poetry? The peculiar interest, first, of the reinforcement coming from this particular poet—a poet's statement usually goes beyond critical analysis. Second, a fresh colouring of old truths (or beliefs, if you prefer), which affect us emotionally rather than intellectually. Taken to pieces, this lecture contains nothing that will be "new" to readers of poetry, and yet its general effect is so positive and individual that to disparage this effect would be absurd. Criticism, no more than poetry, can be purely intellectual without losing three-quarters of its value, and Professor Housman's lecture is excellent proof of this.

"Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it." "Even when poetry has a meaning, as it usually has, it may be inadvisable to draw it out." What Professor Housman values in poetry is the emotional vibration set up by certain combinations of words and not by others; that is, as it were, his test of recognition—he reduces it even to a set of physiological reactions, watering of the eyes, constriction of the throat, and the shiver up the spine. Possibly he overlooks the intelligence here! But no doubt, if pressed, he would admit that poetry may be an enjoyment of the mind.

This particular *virtue* of poetry he finds in whole poems, in a verse and even a single line. His enjoyment works in small units, so that he claims perfection, a *small* perfection, in many places where other critics would go on looking for larger things. Blake and Shakespeare he exalts together: in the end, Blake is the more "purely poetical." This is the opposite point of view of those who would point out, for example, that one of Shakespeare's finest lines is Lear's "Never, never, never, never, never," and that to detach it from the whole play and acknowledge merely the virtuosity of the trochaic line in a passage of blank verse would be to miss the main point. By poetry, then, Professor Housman means the lyric, and a lyrical quality which can be isolated for its magic in a phrase.

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Dryden's "improvements" on Chaucer are cited and some of them are shocking: but it is argument by means of the worst example, which can never cut deep. Surely it is fatal to look for the *same* quality, and expect the same enjoyment, in Dryden and Blake? And if "the combination of dissimilar images" is essentially unpoetical, what of Donne (unmentioned) and Gerard Hopkins? The real test of Professor Housman's conception of English poetry comes in the nineteenth century; the first half strengthens his case, the second finally lets it down—the strain, at any rate, must be met there: but he does not even refer to the Victorians.

One can argue about details and even disagree with some of the main points of Professor Housman's book, but *The Name and Nature of Poetry* remains a positive and integral piece of criticism which is particularly valuable at the moment when poetic currents are going the other way.

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## SHORTER NOTICES

**The Story of a Country Town.** By E. W. HOWE. With an Introduction by BRAND WHITLOCK. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

This is an American "classic" which some English readers may feel scarcely lives up to its native reputation, however historically interesting as a pioneer in realistic portrayal of Middle Western village life some fifty or sixty years ago. It reveals a struggle, never successfully resolved, between on one hand the artist's instinct for truth, and, on the other, the eighteen-eightyish conventions of the novelist. Naturally, the falsity of the latter has grown the more apparent with every passing year since the first publication in 1883, while the revelation of mental narrowness and cultural poverty is by this time something of a commonplace. Nevertheless, the story has a vitality which, all in all, triumphs over its artificialities of invention.

**Sacraments of Simple Folk.** By R. R. MARETT. *Oxford University Press.* 10s.

This study of primitive religious thought is founded upon the second series of Gifford Lectures delivered by Dr. Marett before the University of St. Andrews, and forms a sequel to the first series published under the title *Faith, Hope and Charity in Primitive Religion.* The two series constitute a striking vindication of the spiritual and moral content of primitive thought. Defining sacrament as any rite of which the specific object is to consecrate or make sacred, Dr. Marett demonstrates the way in which primitive man consecrated the functions of eating, fighting, mating, educating, ruling, judging, covenanting, healing and dying. It is possible, so plausible and elegant is the argument, to agree generally with Dr. Marett's interpretation of "savage" ritual; but the wider implications of that interpretation are open to dispute. It might have been better for mankind as a whole if our remotest ancestors had not blundered—via dreams, coincidences, gratitude for benefits apparently conferred, and the cursedness of things—into a supernatural view of their natural environment; if, in other words, early man had had more of Jeremy Bentham than of Jeremy Taylor in the pattern of his consciousness. After twenty millenniums of holy living and holy dying, a tired world may be pardoned if it feels that a non-supernatural consideration of the greatest happiness of the greatest number would be an agreeable change.

**High Low Washington.** By 30-32. *Lippincott.* 10s. 6d.

At first sight this seems to be merely another addition to an overcrowded class. A procession of books, "debunking" Washington politics and society, has followed the famous "Mirror," and the current low ebb of popular respect in America has increased the market for these moderately valuable works. To class *High Low Washington* with these efforts in easy cynicism and scandal is to do it an injustice. For one thing, it is much better written than the run of such books; its frequently effective phrases are more than mere wise-cracks. Its real importance it owes to its point of view. To its authors, the efforts of the rulers of America to evade recognition of the fact that they are facing a real crisis in modern capitalism, not to be conjured away by advertising methods or by the moralistic slogans of the progressives of twenty years ago, are legitimate subject for comedy, as much as the origin of the late Mr. Longworth's silver dollar mascot or the square tables with which Senor Carlos Davila evaded the precedence problems of the great republican capital. The clash between MM. Hoover and Laval, the art concealing art whereby Senator Borah gets on the front page whenever he feels like it, the war of the independent radio entrepreneurs against the Radio Corporation "racket," the preposterous activities of the Congressmen "repairing after his fences," these are *hors d'oeuvre* to the main course which is the "plugging" of the thesis that the United States has entered on a course of State capitalism with no clear idea of what it is all about and a touching trust in the grand old shibboleths of an earlier day. Our authors have little difficulty in showing that good intentions and simple faith are not enough.

**Enchanted Ways.** By JOHN PRIOLEAU. *Dent.* 5s.

The chief duty of a reviewer of this book is to advise every motorist not already familiar with Mr. Prioleau's earlier books to purchase it without delay. Those who already possess the author's *Car and Country*, and *The Open Road Abroad*, have no need of the reviewer's guidance. We talk a good deal about the desecration of our countryside; but the defacement affects only the minutest portion of the whole. The natural beauty of England is, for the most part, still intact for those who have eyes to see it—and, should one add, Mr. Prioleau's excellent, informing, sensitive and unaffected little volume to lead them into the right paths. The ownership of a car is not essential to the enjoyment of this tastefully produced and useful book.

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is of quite incredible violence in extreme cases. If designers permitted it to occur at high speeds, it would kill many persons every year; fortunately they are able to confine it to low speeds, at which it almost inevitably develops with standard chassis when the front springs begin to set, or wear occurs in the steering joints. It is easily cured by resetting the springs, or other simple adjustments; but these repairs cost money, and there is always a slight risk that an unskilled repairer will spoil the suspension or the steering in his well-meant endeavours. In any case, the experience is alarming to an innocent driver; the noise of the vibration is sometimes audible at a distance of several hundred yards, and its force can tear the wheel out of the driver's hand—not that there is any real danger in low-speed wobble, for it always occurs at a certain speed, and when that speed is altered by braking or acceleration, the wobble ceases. The Alvis designer has side-stepped the whole trouble by eliminating the front axle and the track-rod, each front wheel being separately sprung. In this design he has also improved the suspension quite perceptibly; tourists abroad often remark how the Lancia cars tackle bad roads with less jerk and bounce than any other make, as the direct result of separate springing for each front wheel; and a brief trial of the Alvis suggests a similar success. There is no trace of kick at the steering wheel, even at speed over bad ground; the car handles superbly in these respects.

The gear box is of the Wilson preselector type, made by the E.N.V. people, and similar in general layout to other boxes of the same origin. The engines are six-cylinders, with three carburettors, either the 16 h.p. or 20 h.p. sizes being obtainable at option. They are described as "developed" from the Silver Eagle types of the same capacity, but display no perceptible differences in design or performance. The performance is refined rather than terrific, the maximum speed on fourth gear being approximately 70 m.p.h. with 55 m.p.h. on third gear. The acceleration is good, but not stupendous. Much of the precise character which marks the general handling of the car is unquestionably due to an exceptionally rigid frame of the cruciform type, an element of design which always reacts on steering, braking, and acceleration. The equipment is thoroughly modern, notable items being the use of permanent jacks, solidly mounted on the chassis, and of a good "one-shot" system of lubrication. At present a choice of either a four-light or six-light saloon body is given on both the 16 h.p. and 20 h.p. chassis, both having sliding roofs, and all four being priced at £750, irrespective of engine size. Seven-seated limousine bodies are offered at a higher cost on the 20 h.p. chassis. The bodies are of the conventional type usually listed by car manufacturers, and devoid of any features more distinctive than general quality and elegance. But the two chassis will probably acquire sufficient popularity to fall a prey to coachbuilders, who may shortly announce special coachwork for them. A car manufacturer's listed coachwork is always conventional and ordinary in appearance, as he has to scale it to suit all sorts of customers. I regret to mark the absence of any provision for enclosed luggage on these six bodies; it is true that a suitcase container is seldom required on a town car, but a car of this quality cannot escape touring duties on occasion and should be planned for such use. The workmanship throughout is excellent, and the chassis should remain taut and silent for several years without shedding any of its virginal performance. It is an excellent car to buy for keeps, and a reference to second-hand prices will prove that the Alvis cars depreciate at a much slower rate than most of their competitors, and at a far slower rate than most foreign cars of similar size and price. To quote another manufacturer's favourite slogan, they are good investments at any time, as cars go. The man who can pick up a current Alvis in good condition in such a month as April, thus dodging that percentage of the cost which represents the agency commission, receives as good value for money as any car buyer in the world.

These cars must not be confused with the much faster and lower "speed twenty" models, introduced late last year. The speed twenties are faster on third gear than this "Crested Eagle" is on its fourth gear, and can approach 100 m.p.h. on their top ratio, whilst their chassis are laid out for much more lurid cornering, and their engines are altogether livelier. This model is an excellent compromise for town work with fast touring on occasions; but is in no sense a sports car, though its acceleration would not disgrace some sports cars. It will creep along a busy street on top gear at walking pace without jerk or clunking, and accelerate on the same gear to fifty miles an hour in about half a minute; the gain on speed is slightly greater if the gears are used freely, and an unskilled novice can utilise the gears with ease for a fast getaway, thanks to the Wilson change. I assume that these two cars now join with the four-cylinder Firefly and the various editions of the speed twenty to complete the Alvis range; and that they would have appeared earlier if the makers had been able to get their allotment of Wilson gear boxes. The new steering is their chief technical contribution to British motoring, and will be jealously studied by rival firms, especially as it incorporates a very ingenious friction shock absorber, which runs permanently in oil supplied by the one-shot installation. The casual observer may easily overlook several ingenious details in the brake layout, one of which permits the system to function perfectly if not more than one vital part of the mechanism should fracture or become detached. As the odds are enormous against two parts failing simultaneously, the brake gear may be hailed as safe. There is no other car at the price which I would rather own.

R. E. DAVIDSON

# Playtime

## CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

### PROBLEM 26.—THE SEVEN CUCKOOS

Professor Graeme Atta is a curious old bird. He is frequently engaged in abstruse researches on ornithology and, indeed, he has written many important monographs on the subject. His wife acts as his Secretary, but accuracy in detail is not her strong suit. Quite recently Graeme Atta, who delights in writing to his correspondents in their own languages, wrote to seven of his European friends, with the intention of sending them monographs on birds in which they were severally interested. But his wife surpassed all her previous records in inaccuracy, with the result that each of his correspondents received a letter which was obviously intended for one of the others, and a monograph in which he was not particularly interested and which was not the one referred to in the letter which he received.

Kukushka, who was interested in the Eagle Owl, received a letter in Norwegian and a monograph on the Flamingoes of the Camargue, which should have been sent to Professor le Coucoue. Le Coucoue received a letter in Italian and a monograph on the Avocet, which was intended for Dr. Koekoek, the distinguished Dutch scientist, who received a letter in Spanish and a monograph on the Arctic Bluethroat in which Kukker, who received the monograph on the Eagle Owl, was more particularly interested. Professor Cuculo, who was interested in the Bee-eater, received a letter in German, and Herr der Kuckuck, who was interested in the Honey Buzzard, received a letter in French.

*Which of Graeme Atta's correspondents received the monograph which was intended for Professor Cuclillo, and in what language was the letter written which was received by Cuclillo?*

### PROBLEM 24.—PENDULUM GOLF

*Slicer should on balance win money. His "expectation" is worth about £3 12s. 9d., and hence he should not dispose of it for as little as £3.*

The answer can be arrived at by considering each possible result of the first four holes' play in relation to each possible result of the play over the remaining five holes. The separate expectations thus arrived at must then be weighed in accordance with *à priori* probabilities. Slicer's precise expectation is $£\frac{71,595}{19,683}$.

### PROBLEM 23.—GO-HON

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# THE WEEK IN THE CITY

THE BANKERS' STABILISATION PLOT—ROOSEVELT'S REAL MONETARY POLICY—EQUITY SHARES TO BUY

IT is curious that the bankers' plan (or should we say plot?) for stabilising the dollar-sterling exchange between 3.95 and 4.05 for the period of the Conference should have frightened the Americans and not the British. It is we who should have been scared. We might easily find ourselves committed for all time to a 4-dollar rate just because Mr. Montagu Norman thought of it in his bath as an easily managed figure for the next few months. As we argued in the City page last week, we cannot afford, on the basis of comparative wage-costs (the ideal base for rates of exchange), a higher dollar rate than 3.60, and compromise should not carry us beyond 3.80. Mr. Montagu Norman and M. Moret (Bank of France) are, however, greatly alarmed at the prospect of uncontrollable inflation in America and doubtless will regard it as a great victory to peg the Americans down, if they can, to an agreed dollar rate of exchange if only for the period of the Conference. Perhaps Mr. Harrison of the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank is also of their persuasion. The stolid British view is that recovery from the great slump can only come by way of gradual expansion of private enterprise operating from the base of cheap and plentiful money. Have we not already reduced the number of unemployed by 372,000 in the last four months? Are not the reports of industrial companies showing a marked improvement in earnings, and is not the sudden increase of £11½ millions in clearing bank advances in May significant? If only we can stop the Americans from spoiling the recovery with their gambling and inflationary threats the bankers in the City will promise us that we shall be safely out of the slump by 1943.

* * *

If Mr. Norman and M. Moret really talked Mr. Harrison into accepting this view of the recovery there will be trouble in the American camp. The news that Professor Raymond Moley, head of the President's "Brain Trust," is coming to join the American delegation may be the sequel. It is a pity that Professor Moley was not present at the opening of the Conference, instead of Mr. Cordell Hull, to expound the President's policy, for everyone knew that Mr. Hull is as representative of the new America as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is of the Tory Party. We are inclined to suspect that the City has grossly exaggerated the American monetary danger. It may be true that in the United States the success of the inflationary programme is vulgarly measured by the depreciation of the dollar in terms of foreign currencies. Hence the shock to speculative sentiment in Wall Street and the commodity markets when the news of the provisional "pegging" of the dollar-sterling exchange leaked out at the end of last week. But it is absurd to imagine that the success of the President's programme depends upon a boom in equity shares or that cotton, wheat and the metals which are dealt in by speculators are representative of prices in general. President Roosevelt hates the Wall Street gamblers as heartily as do the grandmothers of the Treasury and the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street. Surely he can be relied upon to impose a check on their anti-social activities if they assume dangerous proportions. But the President and his "Brain Trust" are fully aware of the "boost" to a recovery which is given by a little healthy speculation in the initial stages: they have cleverly fostered the illusion of uncontrollable inflation to give a kick to the rise in prices, and they have adroitly used the inflationist majority in Congress to secure dictatorial powers for the Administration in monetary affairs. The results of their diplomacy so far have been a rise of 12.6 per cent. in the American price level (Irving Fisher index) and of 47 per cent. in the dollar prices of primary commodities—all since February 22nd, and an increase of 150 per cent. in the operations of the steel industry—from an output of 19 per cent. to one of 47 per cent. of capacity. The next stage in the President's programme is not printing-press inflation, but public works and "open market" operations. Before leaving for his holiday he authorised an expenditure of $400 millions for State roads and $238 millions for battleship construction (under the London Treaty). Could not our own authorities co-operate with the American in public works (leaving out the battleships) instead of getting nervous and upset about inflation? This would be a far greater achievement for the Conference than any premature stabilisation.

* * *

If the speculative investor feels convinced that the Administration in Washington cannot afford to let enthusiasm die down and for that reason will refuse to peg the dollar even for the period of the Conference, he will not be alarmed by periodic reactions in the markets. Nevertheless, the prices of equity shares are now at an extremely vulnerable level, as the following figures, taken from the Actuaries Investment Index, will show:

| | Industrial Ordinary Shares. | Average Dividend Yields. |
|---|---|---|
| September, 1931 .. .. | 52.1 | 7.16% |
| End June, 1932 .. .. | 44.8 | 5.92% |
| Beginning June, 1933 .. | 62.2 | 3.91% |

To-day's prices are discounting an increase in dividends—that is the position in the second year of the revival. Shares such as International Nickel which have risen from $10 to $21 this year (no par value) in spite of a further loss in the first quarter of this year are entirely dependent upon the American recovery maintaining its pace in the future. On the other hand, shares such as Tate and Lyle at 72*s.* 9*d.* (par value £1) to yield 4.22 per cent. may be fairly discounting an increase in dividends which has already been earned. More uncertain are the shares of British companies which have a large foreign business (as well as British)—such as Babcock and Wilcox, Callenders Cable, and Pinchin, Johnson—but if these companies have been able to earn their reduced present dividends from their "bread and butter" business in Great Britain, their equity shares can be safely included in an investment list. And if you do not buy equity shares, what on earth are you to do with your money?

* * *

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6.30.—ALEC CRAIG on AN EXPERIMENT IN ADULT SEX EDUCATION, and others.
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